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An Introduction to Google Scholar

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AN INTRODUCTION TO GOOGLE SCHOLAR

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What does Google Scholar include?

Google Scholar www.scholar.google.com provides a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. From one place, you can search across many disciplines and sources: articles, theses, books, abstracts and court opinions, from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities and other web sites. Google Scholar helps you find relevant work across the world of scholarly research.

(Important note: If you are doing a comprehensive review of the literature, you should always check other sources such as Summon and discipline-specific databases rather than relying solely on Google Scholar.)

- Google Scholar only contains citation references to books, journal articles, and other resources, not general websites like the Google Search engine.
- It is more complete in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and medicine) literature. It is also fairly comprehensive in the Social Sciences (such as Education and Counseling).
- Has the fewest indexed articles in the Humanities, including Religion and Biblical Studies. (See the “Metrics” link at the top to show the major disciplines and the most highly indexed journals in each discipline.) It also tends to include more recent literature rather than pre-1990 literature because this older literature has often never been digitized and put on the web.
- Although it contains patent records, court cases, and legal documents, we will not be discussing those in this handout.

The Google Scholar logo, with "Google" in its multi-colored font and "Scholar" in a grey sans-serif font.

A search bar with a magnifying glass icon on the right side.

Articles Case law

Stand on the shoulders of giants

What are some advantages of using Google Scholar?

1. In addition to showing resources like journal articles in our subscription databases, it also shows free “open access” and gray literature items (like conference proceedings, organization white papers, etc.) found on the web. The open access movement is increasing in popularity (e.g., Liberty’s Digital Commons). Some of the items found in Google Scholar are not available in our subscription databases (such as EbscoHost or ProQuest platforms).
2. If you choose the Liberty University Library in your initial settings it will point to journal articles (Get it @ LU) and search for books in WorldCat (Library Search). (If you don’t see Get it @ LU, check under the “More” links.)
3. The default sort for results is by relevance ranking. Articles that are cited the most by others show up higher in the rankings. The relevance ranking in our subscription databases is often determined by the number of times the search term(s) is found in the metadata. Thus Google Scholar can be helpful in finding key or seminal authors on a topic because they will be the most cited.
4. It shows who has cited each work so that you can trace patterns of research. If the older, original article is helpful, it is likely that at least some of the more recent articles that cite the older article will also be helpful in your research.
5. It provides suggested machine generated citations in the three format styles used by Liberty University (APA, MLA, and Turabian Notes/Bibliography style).
6. If you are a published author (even in Digital Commons) you can trace those who cite your work.
7. Like regular Google, it can be more “forgiving” than our subscription databases. So if you are looking for a particular article, but you only know partial information it might bring up what you are interested in by providing only incomplete details.

Are there disadvantages to using Google Scholar?

1. Google Scholar is compiled by computers scanning the web, rather than professional indexers. This means that there can be greater transcription errors in the data.
2. Google Scholar operates on keyword searching only. So there are no indexers adding controlled vocabulary subject headings. So you will have to perform multiple searches for various forms of search terms.
3. Google Scholar can't perform complex Boolean or truncated searches like Ebsco or ProQuest can.
4. Like Summon, Google Scholar does not index entire journals or replicate entire databases. It indexes individual articles, particularly ones that have a dedicated web page for individual articles. So there are many journals for which there is no coverage or incomplete coverage.
5. It is hard to determine the quality of some sources and how to cite them. For instance, Google Scholar often struggles with essays (chapters from books) or gray literature, not knowing whether to treat them as books or journal articles.
6. There is not an easy way to distinguish which articles are peer-reviewed.
7. With a Google Scholar search you cannot:
 - a. search by peer review
 - b. sort/search by disciplinary field
 - c. limit search results in as many ways as you can with our subscription databases (only articles, only books, only full-text, etc.)

Finding recent papers

Your search results are normally sorted by relevance, not by date. To find newer articles, try the following options in the left sidebar:

1. Click "Since Year" to show only recently published papers, sorted by relevance;
2. Click "Sort by date" to show just the new additions, sorted by date;
3. Click the envelope icon to have new results periodically delivered by email as they are added to Google Scholar.

Locating the full text of an article

Abstracts are freely available for most of the articles. However, reading the entire article may require a subscription database. Don't ever PAY for articles. If Liberty doesn't have it, we can try to borrow it from another library. Here're a few things to try:

1. click a library link, e.g., "Get it @LU", to the right of the search result;
2. click a link labeled [PDF] (or DOC or HTML) to the right of the search result;
3. click "All versions" under the search result and check out the alternative sources;
4. click "Related articles" or "Cited by" under the search result to explore similar articles.

If you are a current faculty or staff member or a currently enrolled Liberty student, you should see "Get it @LU" on campus. Off campus, you need to tell Google Scholar what institution you are associated with.

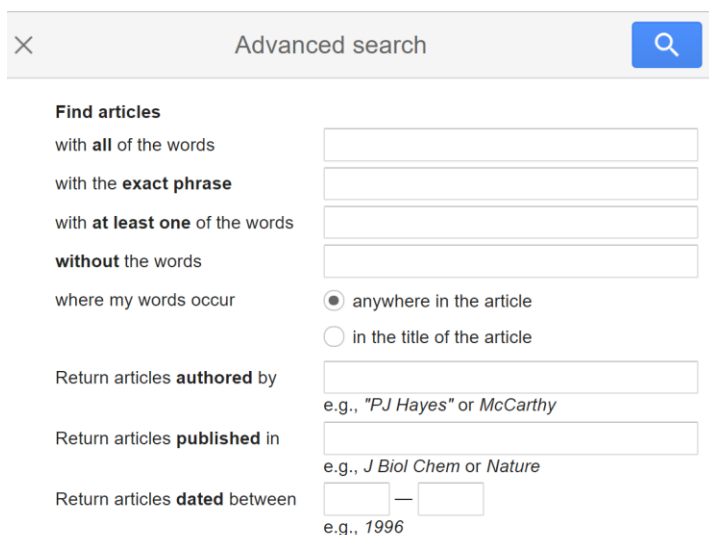
1. Go to "Settings" and then "Library Links" and type in "Liberty University." (Choose "Get it @ LU" and WorldCat. Don't choose "Get it @ LU options." That was for our former article linker and those links won't work anymore.)
2. Links to BL Direct (British Library) are going to try to sell you the article.
3. When you click on "Get it @ LU" and then a specific "article" link, if you are off-campus it will require you to log into EZProxy and will then provide access to the article.
4. Some articles might show that they are only be available in our print collection. In that case, you may submit an ILLiad request (there is a link that will automatically fill in the form for you) and we will scan the article for you.
5. Sometimes, if you click on the title of an article rather than "Get it @ LU" it will offer to sell you the article. Never pay for articles. You can use "Journal Finder" (on the Library's articles/journals/database page) to see which, if any, of our databases contain the journal and that article or request it via interlibrary loan.

What if you just see [Citation] for a particular resource?

Citation notations are made when Google knows that a resource exists (because some other source cited it) but they can find no web resource to match it. These tend to be older sources or those that don't have a web page for a specific article or a preview available in Google books. You can either choose to have Google Scholar display these known citations to other works or suppress them by unchecking "include citations" on the left.

Getting better answers

1. If you're new to the subject, it may be helpful to pick up the terminology from secondary sources. E.g., a Wikipedia article for "overweight" might suggest a Scholar search for "morbid obesity." Sometimes there are more scholarly terms used in research rather than the popular terminology. "Heart attacks" might show up in medical articles as "myocardial infarctions." You might want to do a search on alternate wordings such as both "capital punishment" and "death penalty" or both "teenagers" and "adolescents."
2. Remember that scholarly works are usually written by scholars for other scholars. If you want just an initial broad overview of a topic you might want to check Wikipedia (but just use this to become more informed, don't cite it in your paper), other reference works, textbooks, or popular books or magazines.
3. When you find an article that is particularly applicable to your research, you can see whether others have later cited that article. It might say "Cited by 312." If you click on that link, it will show you the 312 other books or articles within Google Scholar that cited the first article. You can even "search within these results" among the 312 for key words if there is some particular aspect of the topic you are researching.
4. Explore! There's rarely a single answer to a research question. Click "Related articles" or "Cited by" to see closely related work, or search for author's name and see what else they have written.



The screenshot shows the 'Advanced search' interface in Google Scholar. It features a search bar with a magnifying glass icon and a close button (X). Below the search bar, there are several sections for refining the search:

- Find articles**
 - with **all** of the words
 - with the **exact phrase**
 - with **at least one** of the words
 - without** the words
- where my words occur
 - anywhere in the article
 - in the title of the article
- Return articles **authored by** [text input]
e.g., "PJ Hayes" or McCarthy
- Return articles **published in** [text input]
e.g., J Biol Chem or Nature
- Return articles **dated between** [text input] — [text input]
e.g., 1996

Advanced search screen features

1. If you click on the three line menu in the upper left, you will see an advanced search screen.
2. Google suggests using first initials when searching for author names. Many articles only include the first initial of the author.
3. Abbreviations of journal names are often used, e.g. J Biol Chem rather than Journal of Biological Chemistry.
4. Keep in mind that Google Scholar gathers bibliographical data from text and citations, (including pre-prints, which may include incomplete information).
5. Often, when searching in Google Scholar "less is more." Only include essential or key terms such as divorce and children rather than "the harmful effects of divorce on children."

To find articles that have cited you

1. Start by clicking the **Advanced Scholar Search** link to the right of the search button.
2. Put your name in the "Return articles authored by" box. Google suggests entering your name by putting quotation marks around your first initial(s) and last name (for instance, Jeffrey Dull would search for "J DULL"), and this is generally the best way to start. Click **Search Scholar**.
3. On the results page, look underneath the article you want to see citations for and click the leftmost link, **Cited by** followed by a number. If you don't see a **Cited by** link, Google was unable to find any articles that cited it. Click the **Cited by** link for an article of interest to you.
4. You'll see a list of results that have cited this article.
5. You can create an email alert to be notified when others cite you in the future.
6. Go to "My Citations" to set up your personal author profile.

Other Google Scholar Tips and Tricks

1. You can click on "Cite" to get a suggested citation. You might have to fix the capitalization or punctuation and in some cases it doesn't do a great job of distinguishing between books and journal articles.
2. In Settings, you can choose which citation manager (such as EndNote, which the Liberty Library provides) to export your citations to. Or, on the fly, you can choose this from the bottom of the "Cite" screen.
3. The "My Citations" link is designed for authors and scholars to track their citations, not for students or researchers to have a personal folder like those available in WorldCat, Ebsco, and ProQuest.
4. If you are looking for only the latest research, you can set a date range to only displays items within those dates.

- You can save the URL (web address) for Google Scholar searches to repeat the same search later. You can also “Copy this link” for the Get it @ LU links Scholar finds. These links don’t need proxying information so they will work off campus. When you click on an individual article that the link brings up, that is where you are proxied in.

The screenshot shows the Google Scholar interface with the search term "attention deficit disorder counseling". The results list several articles. Callout boxes provide the following information:

- Search terms are bolded in results:** Points to the bolded text "attention deficit disorder" in the search bar and the article titles.
- Set a date range to find the latest research or particular years:** Points to the "Any time" filter on the left sidebar.
- Click here to see which Liberty journal databases contain the article:** Points to the "Get It @ LU" link next to the second article.
- This is an open access PDF you can click to view:** Points to the "[PDF]" link next to the second article.
- Create an alert to receive future results for this topic:** Points to the "Create alert" checkbox on the left sidebar.
- Click here to see 444 articles that cite this one:** Points to the "Cited by 444" link for the third article.
- This article has 15 different online versions:** Points to the "All 15 versions" link for the fourth article.
- Click here to see a suggested citation for the resource:** Points to the "Cited by" link for the fourth article.

- If you are off campus, you will often have to tell Google Scholar you are affiliated with Liberty University each time you log in. Your web browser remembers your settings in a "cookie" on your computer's disk, and sends this cookie to the website along with every search. Check that your browser isn't configured to discard cookies. Also, check your privacy settings. Your settings are stored on your computer, not on Google’s servers, so look at your browser's preferences or internet options if it keeps forgetting to show you “Get it @ LU.”
- Remember, if you are on campus and assisting an off-campus student, what you can access from our subscription databases with one click might take some additional steps to see off-campus.
- If you are an author wanting to track your citations, there are other services available such as ISI Web of Science and Scopus. Google Scholar covers a wider variety of subject areas and a greater number of journals than Web of Science but lacks precise search-refining tools.

Some other open access sources

1. Try a Google “site” search. Entering “site:.edu” (without quotes) before your search term will only show you results from institutions of higher education. These are often more scholarly websites. You can also try “site:.gov,” etc.
2. For Biblical and theological topics, try www.tinyurl.com/theojour. This is a homemade search engine for theological journals on the web.
3. There is a difference between Google alerts and Google Scholar alerts. Google alerts show you if pages show up on your search terms anywhere on the web. Google Scholar alerts just show you when things are added to Google Scholar’s citations of books, articles, etc.
4. Try Google Books www.books.google.com. There are four types of views (No preview, snippet view, preview, and free Google E-books.) Of these, the “preview” tends to be the most helpful. Full-view books tend to be older than 1923, whereas you can view (and use in your research because it is a scan of the actual book) up to 10% of many current, in-print books if a “preview” view is available. On the left side of the screen, click on “Find it in a library” to get citation information for the book you are viewing.



inerrancy



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Using Google Books

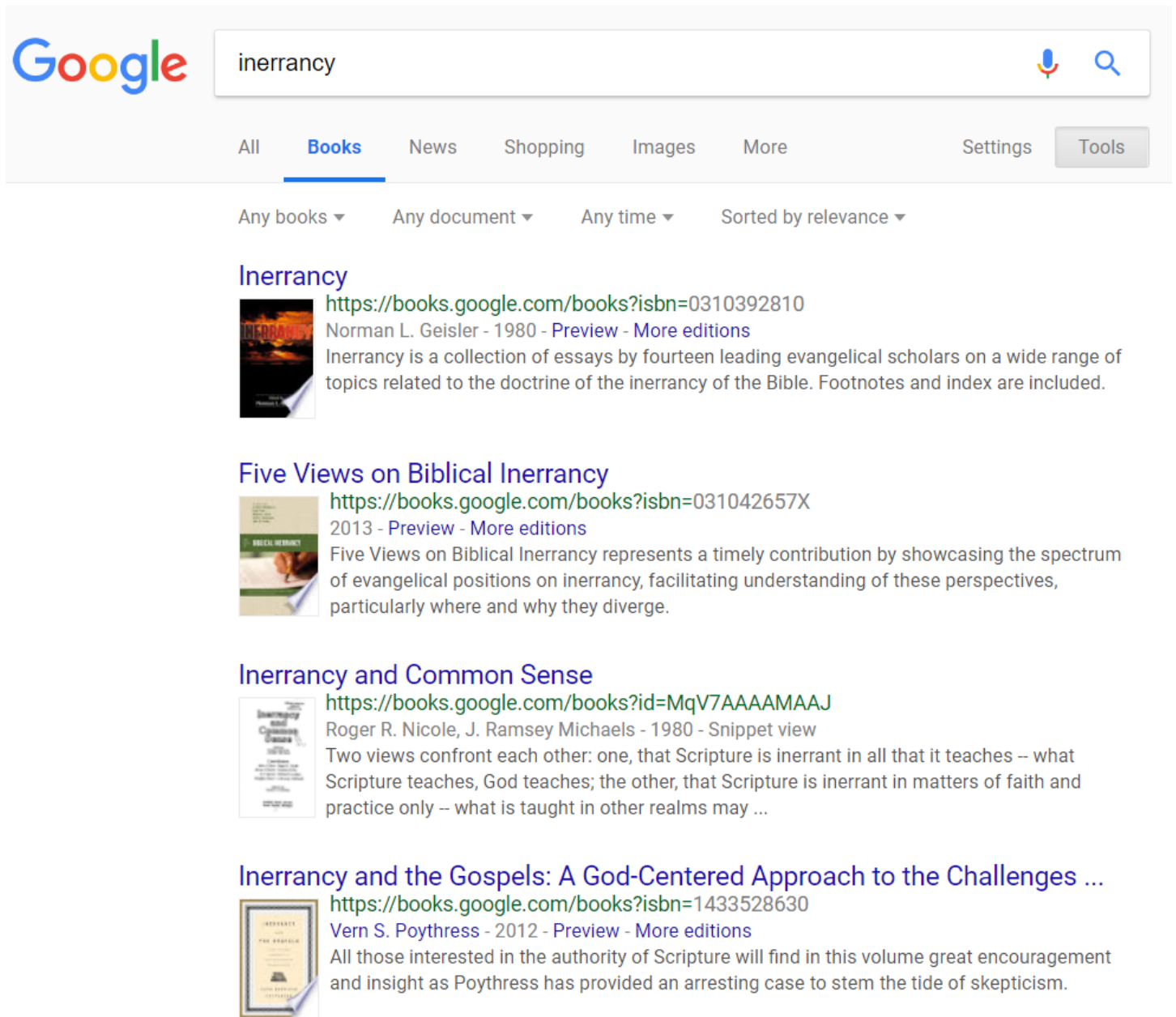
Go to www.books.google.com. Enter a search term, or perhaps a phrase that you have seen that you want to check in a book, or a book title or author. There are four views in Google Books:

1. No preview
2. Snippet view (not very useful, unless you already own the book. Then it becomes a searchable index to your own book. Look up a particular word and it will show you which pages that word occurs on)
3. Preview – this is for books that are still in copyright. It will only show you about 10% of the book. Sometimes portions say “pages 23-27 are not part of this preview.” But you can choose which 10% of the book you wanted to see. For instance, if it were a commentary on John, if you started at page 1 and started scrolling, you might only be allowed to see the first chapter or so. But you could use the search box to “search within this book” and search for the phrase “caught in adultery” and go right to chapter 8 and start accumulating your 10% of pages starting in the middle.
4. Free Google EBooks – ordinarily these are books in the public domain (government works, etc.) or books on which the copyright has expired (older than 1923). You can download the entire book either as picture (PDF) files, or as editable text. (Since the text is “computer read” with optical character recognition, you might have to clean it up a bit. For instance, the word “barn” might scan as “bam” if the computer doesn’t see the space between the “r” and the “n.”

The most helpful books are generally those which have a preview (unless you are looking for older, primary sources which may be available in full-text).

For my example, I typed in the word “inerrancy.” Below is the results list. I clicked on Tools, and instead of “Any books” I clicked on “Preview available” to eliminate those with no preview or just a snippet view.

The first author listed, Norm Geisler, is a conservative evangelical. So I click on the title.



The screenshot shows a Google search for "inerrancy" on the Books tab. The search bar contains "inerrancy" and the Google logo is on the left. Below the search bar are navigation tabs: All, Books (selected), News, Shopping, Images, More, Settings, and Tools. Filter options include "Any books", "Any document", "Any time", and "Sorted by relevance".

Inerrancy
<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=0310392810>
Norman L. Geisler - 1980 - [Preview](#) - [More editions](#)
Inerrancy is a collection of essays by fourteen leading evangelical scholars on a wide range of topics related to the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Bible. Footnotes and index are included.

Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy
<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=031042657X>
2013 - [Preview](#) - [More editions](#)
Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy represents a timely contribution by showcasing the spectrum of evangelical positions on inerrancy, facilitating understanding of these perspectives, particularly where and why they diverge.

Inerrancy and Common Sense
<https://books.google.com/books?id=MqV7AAAAMAAJ>
Roger R. Nicole, J. Ramsey Michaels - 1980 - [Snippet view](#)
Two views confront each other: one, that Scripture is inerrant in all that it teaches – what Scripture teaches, God teaches; the other, that Scripture is inerrant in matters of faith and practice only – what is taught in other realms may ...

Inerrancy and the Gospels: A God-Centered Approach to the Challenges ...
<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=1433528630>
Vern S. Poythress - 2012 - [Preview](#) - [More editions](#)
All those interested in the authority of Scripture will find in this volume great encouragement and insight as Poythress has provided an arresting case to stem the tide of skepticism.

When I click on the title, I usually see either the front cover or perhaps a page within the book that contains my search terms. In the lower left corner, you can see “Search in this book.” So I can choose a specific term. I am going to look for 2 Timothy 3:16, “all Scripture is inspired by God.” I will put “3:16” in the search box, since I’m not sure how the book chapter will be written or abbreviated (i.e. 2 Tim 3:16, II Timothy 3:16, Timothy, 2nd 3:16, etc.)

Google inerrancy


Books

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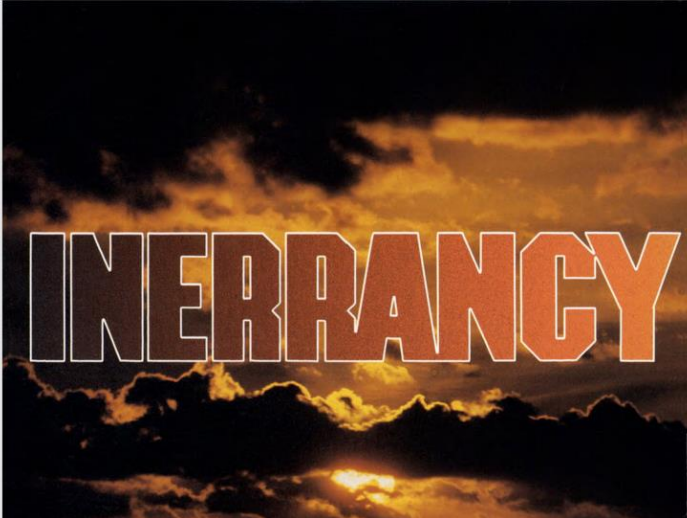
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 **Inerrancy**
edited by Norman L. Geisler
7 Reviews
Write review

inerrancy

About this book

Result 1 of 13 in this book for inerrancy - [Previous](#) [Next](#) - [View all](#)



Searching for 3:16 within just this book yielded this result:

Google inerrancy


Books

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Books-A-Million
IndieBound

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 **Inerrancy**
edited by Norman L. Geisler
7 Reviews
Write review

3:16

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Showing 9 results in this book for 3:16 - Order by: [relevance](#) | [pages](#)

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book had an autograph, and we can accommodate the fact that amanuenses were used in their production, without attributing inspiration to the amanuenses. The fact that the *finished product* is designated "God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16) guarantees inerrant copying by the amanuensis without placing him in the same category as the author, who was moved by the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Peter 1:21). Accordingly, the restriction of inspiration to the

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critical view."³⁴

Galatians 3:16

An instructive example of the New Testament writers' view of the Old Testament is Paul's use of the word *seed* in Galatians 3:16—"The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people,

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inspiration. He develops this view from the two classical passages, 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21. The former states that "all Scripture" is *theopneustos* and therefore profitable for a variety of purposes. The latter predicates of every "prophecy of Scripture" that "men spoke [the prophecies] from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."
In conjunction with 2 Timothy 3:16, Warfield points out that

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THE INERRANCY OF THE AUTOGRAPHA 191

Septuagint version. In 2 Timothy 3:16, however, Paul is reflecting on the specific Scripture as it originated from God, and thus

This will take you to WorldCat to find citation information and to see if the book is in a library nearby

Enter terms here to search within the book. The box will likely contain your original search words.

Then I will click on a particular page of interest. I can scroll to the pages immediately preceding and following as well. When I have found a page I like, it won't allow me to save or print it. But I can use the "Snipping Tool" available in Windows to take a picture of a portion of the screen and save it. To open Snipping Tool, select the **Start** button in the lower right, type **snipping tool**, and then select it in the search results.

What a “snip” from the Snipping Tool looks like for an individual page

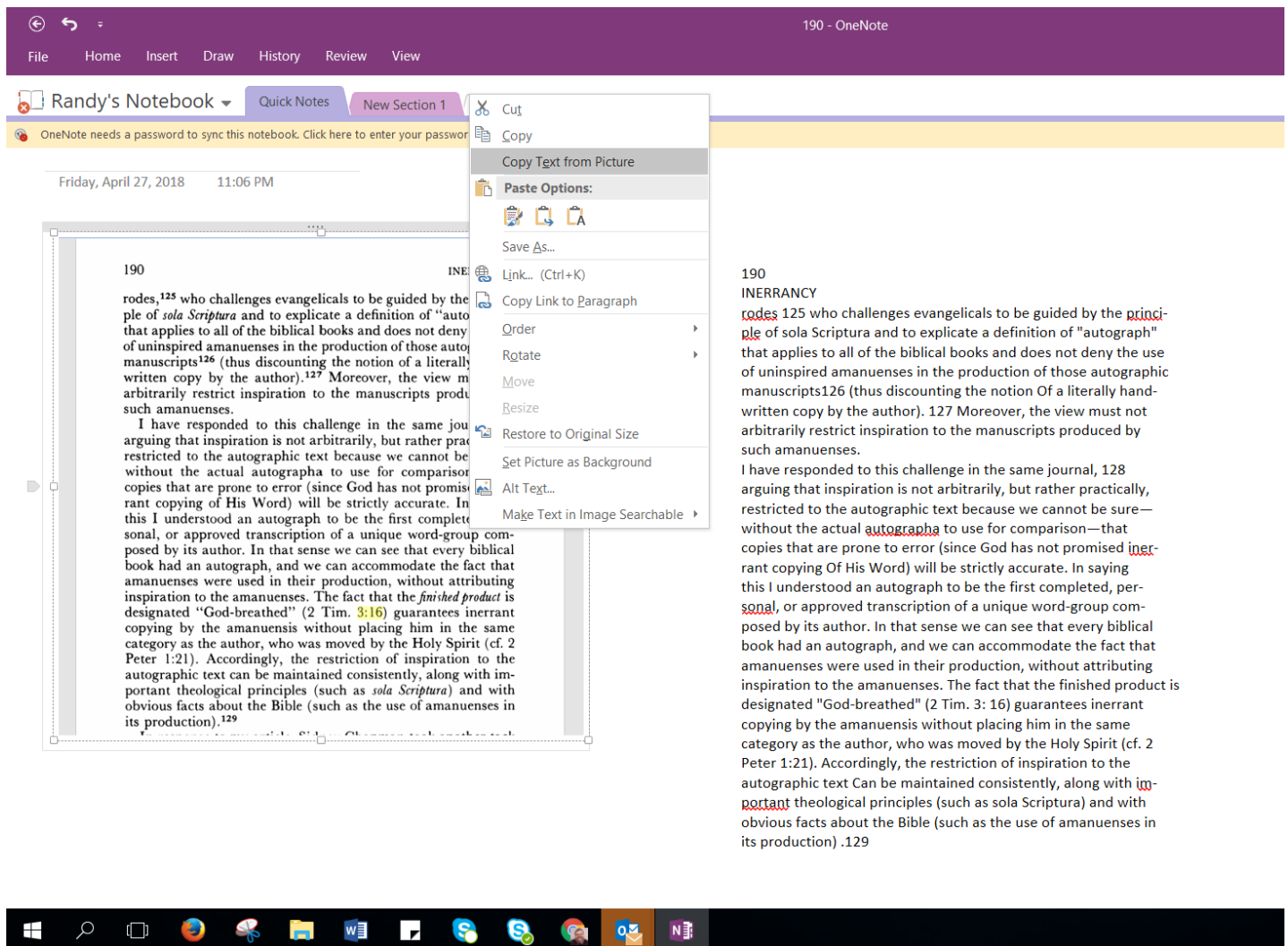
rodes,¹²⁵ who challenges evangelicals to be guided by the principle of *sola Scriptura* and to explicate a definition of “autograph” that applies to all of the biblical books and does not deny the use of uninspired amanuenses in the production of those autographic manuscripts¹²⁶ (thus discounting the notion of a literally handwritten copy by the author).¹²⁷ Moreover, the view must not arbitrarily restrict inspiration to the manuscripts produced by such amanuenses.

I have responded to this challenge in the same journal,¹²⁸ arguing that inspiration is not arbitrarily, but rather practically, restricted to the autographic text because we cannot be sure—without the actual autographa to use for comparison—that copies that are prone to error (since God has not promised inerrant copying of His Word) will be strictly accurate. In saying this I understood an autograph to be the first completed, personal, or approved transcription of a unique word-group composed by its author. In that sense we can see that every biblical book had an autograph, and we can accommodate the fact that amanuenses were used in their production, without attributing inspiration to the amanuenses. The fact that the *finished product* is designated “God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16) guarantees inerrant copying by the amanuensis without placing him in the same category as the author, who was moved by the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Peter 1:21). Accordingly, the restriction of inspiration to the autographic text can be maintained consistently, along with important theological principles (such as *sola Scriptura*) and with obvious facts about the Bible (such as the use of amanuenses in its production).¹²⁹

The text you save will be in a “picture” format (where each letter is drawn dot by dot) rather than an editable text format. I have not found the optical character recognition in Word to do a great job of converting a picture of text like this to editable text. But I have had good results using Microsoft OneNote which is part of Microsoft Office. You drop your text picture into the desktop version of OneNote, right click on it to “Copy Text From Picture” and it will “read” the words and give you text where you can delete words, etc. Here I show what the pop up box looks like. The “picture” of the page is on the left and the text you can edit is on the right.

How the copied text looks in the Desktop version of Microsoft OneNote

On the left is the “picture” taken with the Snipping Tool. Right click on the picture and you’ll see the option to “Copy Text from Picture.” On the right, I’ve pasted the text or you can insert into a document.



Whatever page number you see is a photographic reproduction of the original book. So if it says page “190” you can cite that as though you had the printed book in your hand. How do you cite the book?

- On the left hand side of the Google Books screen, you see “Find it in a Library.”
- That will take you to www.worldcat.org.
- In the case of this book, Liberty owns it, so if the 10% it allowed you to see was insufficient, you could obtain this book from us.
- If you put in your zip code, it will show you whether a library near you owns it.
- It will also give a suggested citation.
- Often, you have to fix the state abbreviation. It might list “Mich.” and you should use the two letter postal code MI, or “Calif.” for California which should be CA.
- If it doesn’t say “Find it in a Library” you might need to note the book title and search for it in WorldCat yourself.
- Sometimes the suggested citation adds a web address or is not complete. You need to include the city, state, and publisher as well as the publication date.

This is what a WorldCat screen looks like for an individual book

WorldCat will tell you the city, state, and publisher. It will provide a suggested citation under "Cite/Export" in a variety of citation styles. It will show you whether Liberty has the book if you enter the zip code 24502. Or it will show you if the book is available in a library near you.

The screenshot shows the WorldCat website interface. The main content area displays the book details for "Inerrancy" by Norman L. Geisler, published by Grand Rapids : Zondervan, ©1979. The page includes options to "Add to list", "Add tags", "Write a review", and "Rate this item". A "Cite/Export" pop-up window is open, showing citation options for APA (6th ed.), Chicago (Author-Date, 15th ed.), Harvard (18th ed.), MLA (7th ed.), and Turabian (6th ed.). Below the citation options, there is a text box containing the citation: "Geisler, Norman L. *Inerrancy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979." The "Export a citation" section offers options like "Export to RefWorks", "Export to EndNote / Reference Manager", and "Export to EasyBib".

Below the book details, there is a section titled "Find a copy in the library". It includes a search box for "Enter your location:" with the value "24502" and a "Find libraries" button. Below the search box, it says "Submit a complete postal address for best results." and "Displaying libraries 1-6 out of 317 for all 5 editions (Lynchburg, VA 24502, USA)". A table lists the libraries:

Library	Held formats	Distance
1. Liberty University Jerry Falwell Library Lynchburg, VA 24516 United States	Book	1 mile MAP IT
2. University of Richmond		