

ZOTERO: A CITATION MANAGER FOR THEOLOGY AND  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES RESEARCH

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A White Paper

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Shepherding Shepherds to Shepherd the Flock

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by

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17 February 2023

## ZOTERO: A CITATION AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCE MANAGER FOR THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PAPERS

Research and writing are indispensable components in graduate and postgraduate study. By research, we mean to say demonstrating skills and mastery of identifying and citing valuable reference material (see Milton's Taxonomy of References:

Zotero is a powerful and easy-to-use citation and bibliographic reference manager. The free resource helps students, faculty, and professionals organize their research and create citations, bibliographies, and notes in a variety of formats. This guide will provide an overview of how to use Zotero for theological research papers.

Install Zotero onto your computer by visiting the [Zotero website](#) and downloading the appropriate version.

Zotero is available for Mac or Windows operating systems. Zotero is also available for iOS products such as iPhone and iPad.

Create a Zotero account and log in. This will allow you to sync your library across all of your devices and share it with others.

Create your first collection within the library. This could be one module, or it could be listed as the course. One can also create some folders within the main collection folder to differentiate between journals and books, peer reviews, popular, and so forth.

Start collecting sources for your paper. Zotero offers a variety of ways to add sources to your library, including the browser extension, import options, manually entering data, and searching within the library itself.

The beauty of Zotero is *the connector*. The connector is an extension that you will install on your browser (Chrome, Edge, Safari). This will allow easy citation selection as you peruse through, e.g., Google Scholar or a theological studies database (e.g., JSTOR, ATLA). As you click on a citation, Zotero connector sends all the respective meta-data into your selected collection folder or sub folder. When you get ready to cite or to print out a bibliography, you have all of the data formatted in Chicago 17<sup>th</sup> edition or Turabian 9<sup>th</sup> edition (one can customize an output style to, e.g., the Erskine Seminary style manual, which is an adaptation of Turabian 9<sup>th</sup> edition).

Organize your sources into collections. This will make it easier to find the reference you need when you're writing your paper.

Insert citations into your paper with the Zotero plugin. As noted, Zotero can generate citations in a variety of formats, including MLA, APA (for your other graduate degree work) and the traditional theology and religious studies styles, viz., Chicago 17<sup>th</sup> (full note) and Turabian 9<sup>th</sup> edition.

Create a bibliography at the end of your paper. Zotero can generate a bibliography in the same format as your citations. Make notes on your sources. You can add notes to each source in your Zotero library and keep track of your thoughts on the source.

It is true that the Christian philosopher, Jacques Ellul wrote, "The machine has become our master, and we are its slaves." (Ellul, 1970, p. 3). However, even the most aspiring Luddite-theological student will appreciate citation management tools like Zotero (and for those who demand a higher-octane citation management vehicle, Endnote).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological Bluff*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970.