

Word by Word Author Guide

Thank you for considering publishing with Word by Word, the Logos blog. We look forward to reading your work! Before submitting your piece, review the standards below.

Vision Standard

We are committed to increasing biblical literacy and accessibility for every Christian around the world.

—Logos’s vision statement

The content we publish at *Word by Word* aligns closely with our company vision statement. As such, we evaluate every article submitted for its value for Bible study. We seek to help every reader go deeper in God’s Word, no matter where they’re starting from. The content we’re excited to publish often falls into at least one of these categories:

- Helpfully summarizes a difficult or controversial theological topic
- Models faithful study of a common or commonly misunderstood Bible passage
- Contributes to academic dialogue on a topic in biblical studies
- Offers practical help for Bible teachers and preachers

The majority of rejections are a result of a piece’s failure to align with this vision statement, so cast a critical eye over your work before submitting.

All submissions must be the original work of the author (without reliance on a co-author or generative AI) and make a fresh argument.

Quality Standards

Write a compelling title.

A good title compels a reader to click and read. It should suggest what people can expect to learn from your piece, but it should also create interest. Good titles create interest by asking a question (e.g., “Did the Ancient Jews Own Pets?”), making a provocative, suggestive, or memorable statement (e.g., “What ‘Love Your Enemies’ Really Means”), or including strong or catchy words (e.g., “4 Views on Hell and Damnation”). Titles should not be misleading, but neither should they be dull. Logos editors may alter or rewrite titles for readability or discoverability.

Write an introductory paragraph that includes your thesis.

Your introduction should include a hook that engages a reader, a brief summary of your topic (including its definition, where applicable), and your thesis. A distinctive of online writing is that

serving the reader means leading with the most important or relevant information. Treat your thesis as the organizing principle of your piece as a whole: not the “reward” for the reader withheld until later.

Don't hedge. Say everything you intend to say.

Unlike academic writing, the success of online writing hinges on an article's ability to make a single argument directly. Don't expect the reader to deduce your opinion—make your position plain.

Use subheadings.

Break up the body of your piece into sections with subheadings. Subheadings signal a new line or advancement of thought in the flow of the piece. This makes your work more readable and also makes the structure of your reasoning more transparent. Subheadings should be clear and short and should occur at natural points of transition between blocks of text. If you have been assigned a topic, we suggest using it in subheadings where it fits. All subheadings should start at H2.

Avoid scare quotes except to convey figurative speech.

Scare quotes can obscure the tone of a sentence or phrase. They can also be confused with quotations.

Use the simplest prose possible.

No matter how advanced your subject matter or how knowledgeable your audience, it is always a service to the reader to make your writing as plain as possible. Avoid jargon, define your key terms, and break up complex sentences into smaller ones. Even if your article is addressing an academic audience, imagine your reader is a first-year seminary student.

Other standards:

- Cite your sources.
- Avoid the passive voice.
- Avoid negations.
- Keep track of antecedents.

Editorial Standards

All editorial standards at Logos follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* 2017 (CMOS). If an editorial issue is not addressed there, we default to *The SBL Handbook*, second edition.

Below is a short list of common editorial errors. Review them carefully and make sure your piece is free of them before submission.

Word by Word observes American standards for spelling and grammar, not British.

British: recognise; colour; cancelled; catalogue

American: recognize; color; canceled; catalog

British: Jesus says, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit’.

American: Jesus says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”

Your initial citation of any source should be long-form. Every subsequent citation of the same source should be short-form. Endnotes are added inside body text with brackets as below:

First reference to a given work:

[note]Robert Elmer, *Fount of Heaven: Prayers of the Early Church* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022), 37.[/note]

Subsequent references to a given work:

[note]Elmer, *Fount of Heaven*, 56.[/note]

For short-form endnote citations, eliminate the initial articles (A, An, and The) of titles, but do not abbreviate titles.

Incorrect: [note]Lewis, *A Grief Observed*, 14.[/note]

Correct: [note]Lewis, *Grief Observed*, 14.[/note]

Incorrect: [note]Barth, *CD 1/1:236–37*.[/note]

Correct: [note]Barth, *Church Dogmatics 1/1:236–37*.[/note]

Scripture citations should appear in-text—not in endnotes—and enclosed in parentheses.

When Christ said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11), he was alluding to standard shepherding practices familiar to his audience.

The exception is block quotes, in which the reference in parentheses follows final punctuation of the verse.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John 10:11)

House Standards

Use the serial/Oxford comma.

Incorrect: “She stood, looked and listened.”
Correct: “She stood, looked, and listened.”

Use ellipses (...) to indicate missing or omitted text only. Do not use ellipses to suggest a pause, a break, or continuing text; instead, make use of commas, semicolons, colons, or em-dashes. Where appropriate, we make exceptions for informal or conversational writing.

Incorrect: “Having trouble praying? Well ... I can relate.”
Correct: “Having trouble praying? Well, I can relate.”

Use auto-formatted ellipses only (that is, the ellipsis character Mac: ⋯; Win: Ctrl + Alt + .), and place a space on either side. E.g.,

Incorrect: “In the beginning was the Word...all things were made through him ...”
Correct: “In the beginning was the Word ... all things were made through him.”

Use em-dashes sparingly. An em-dash should be inserted between words or phrases and before the source of an epigraph or blocked quote, rather than using single or double hyphens ([Mac: ⌘ + Shift + -](#); [Win: Alt + 0151](#)). There should be no spaces separating the em-dash from the words or phrases on either side of it (see CMOS 6.87–94).

Incorrect: My friends--that is, my former friends – ganged up on me.
Correct: My friends—that is, my former friends—ganged up on me.

Use en-dashes rather than hyphens in page ranges, verse ranges, and date ranges ([Mac: ⌘ + -](#); [Win: Alt + 0150](#)).

Incorrect: 93-111; Rom 6:2-5; 356-435 BC
Correct: 93–111; Rom 6:2–5; 356–435 BC

Unless it appears in parentheses, always spell out Scripture citations. Note in the examples that Scripture abbreviations forgo a closing period.

Incorrect: “I argue the Spirit makes the church (cf., 1 Corinthians 2).”
Correct: “I argue the Spirit makes the church (cf., 1 Cor 2).”
Incorrect: “Paul quotes Ps 116:11 in Rom 3.”
Correct: “Paul quotes Psalm 116:11 in Romans 3.”

If a biblical book belongs to a series, number it with Arabic numerals, not Roman numerals. Spell out the numeral only if it begins a sentence.

Incorrect: II Kgs 4:12; Second Chronicles 3

Correct: 2 Kgs 4:12; 2 Chronicles 3

Incorrect: “2 Peter, unlike 1 Peter, has had a disputed place in the canon.”

Correct: “Second Peter, unlike 1 Peter, has had a disputed place in the canon.”

Scripture Abbreviations

listed in canonical order

Hebrew Bible/Old Testament:

Genesis	Gen
Exodus	Exod
Leviticus	Lev
Numbers	Num
Deuteronomy	Deut
Joshua	Josh
Judges	Judg
Ruth	Ruth
1–2 Samuel	1–2 Sam
1–2 Kings	1–2 Kgs
1–2 Chronicles	1–2 Chr
Ezra	Ezra
Nehemiah	Neh
Esther	Esth
Job	Job
Psalms	Ps (pl. Pss)
Proverbs	Prov
Ecclesiastes	Eccl (or Qoh)
Song of Solomon	Song
Isaiah	Isa
Jeremiah	Jer
Lamentations	Lam
Ezekiel	Ezek
Daniel	Dan
Hosea	Hos
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obad
Jonah	Jonah

Micah	Mic
Nahum	Nah
Habakkuk	Hab
Zephaniah	Zeph
Haggai	Hag
Zechariah	Zech
Malachi	Mal

New Testament:

Matthew	Matt
Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke
Acts	Acts
Romans	Rom
1-2 Corinthians	1-2 Cor
Galatians	Gal
Ephesians	Eph
Philippians	Phil
Colossians	Col
1-2 Thessalonians	1-2 Thess
1-2 Timothy	1-2 Tim
Titus	Tit
Philemon	Phil
Hebrews	Heb
James	Jas
1-2 Peter	1-2 Pet
1-3 John	1-3 John
Jude	Jude
Revelation	Rev

Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books:

1-3 Esdras	1-3 Esd
Tobit	Tob
Judith	Jdt
Additions to Esther	Add Esth
Wisdom of Solomon	Wis
Sirach	Sir
Baruch	Bar
Letter of Jeremiah	Ep Jer

Song of the Three Young Men	Sg Three
Susanna	Sus
Bel and the Dragon	Bel
Prayer of Manasseh	Pr Man
1-2 Maccabees	1-2 Macc