

**Acts
NT 1110-3**

Fall, 2016
Ozark Christian College
9:00 a.m. Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri
4 Credit Hours

Shane J. Wood
417-624-2518, x2661
wood.shane@occ.edu
Hillside Building – Office 5
www.shanejwood.com

Course Description

An exegetical study of the book of Acts that considers the expansion of Christianity in the earliest days of the church from AD 30-60. Students will learn how the church understood its mission in Jewish and Graeco-Roman settings, the doctrines related to Christian conversion, the Holy Spirit (and spiritual gifts), church polity, church challenges, and how the NT epistles fit into the framework of the missionary journeys. Students will develop a reliance on the Holy Spirit, love for the church, and be able to translate principles into ministry and intercultural settings. Classes will be conducted primarily in lecture format.

College Mission

The ultimate mission of Ozark Christian College is to glorify God by evangelizing the lost and edifying Christians worldwide. The immediate mission of Ozark Christian College is to train men and women for Christian service as a degree-granting institution of biblical higher education.

College Learning Goal

The learning goal of Ozark Christian College is to educate and equip students to become like Christ and serve Christ in leadership ministry. Graduates will be biblically grounded, spiritually matured, culturally engaged, and vocationally prepared.

College Learning Objectives (CLO)

Students graduating from Ozark Christian College will...

1. **Know and value the historical and theological content of the Bible.**
2. **Interpret scripture to discover the author's intended meaning.**
3. Communicate effectively in written and oral forms.
4. Think critically from a Christian worldview.
5. Evaluate their spiritual formation and develop plans for continued growth.
6. Articulate how the global mission of the Church relates to their intended ministry settings.
7. Meet specific competencies as determined by each major program.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Write a research paper explaining the meaning of a particular passage in the book of Acts [CLO 1, 2].
2. Understand the respective divine and human roles in the salvation process as witnessed in the book of Acts [CLO 2].
3. Articulate basic missiological principles as expressed by the Apostles in Acts [CLO 1, 2].

Information Literacy:

Ozark Christian College is committed to information literacy training. This training will be intentional, incremental, and missional. Students will learn to access, evaluate, and utilize pertinent information in their ministry preparation.

ADA Accommodation:

If you have a disability and are requesting an accommodation, please contact the Vice President of Enrollment Services at 417-624-2518 Extension 2006 as soon as possible.

Mode of Communication:

Students will be required to use their occ.edu email address as an official mode of communication regardless of Canvas or other email accounts. Students are to be held responsible for checking the official email for assignments and messages.

Learning Management System

This course will use the Canvas LMS (<http://occ.instructure.com>). The professor will keep all grades and attendance on Canvas, and all course handouts that are not given in class will be posted there. Occasionally students will be required to do certain quizzes on the Canvas site, as well as submit certain assignments there. Each student will receive an "invitation" to the course on Canvas through the OCC e-mail address. Students can arrange to receive notifications of changes to the course on the Canvas site in a number of different formats. The student's first responsibility in this class is to accept the invitation from Canvas for this course. Any changes to the course schedule will be made on the Canvas site, which will supersede the schedule printed in this syllabus.

Classroom Policies, Procedures, and Expectations:

- **Cheating** – Don't do it! It will always be a temptation in your classes and in your life to take shortcuts through different forms of cheating, but you must fight the urge and do your work yourself. This is how you will benefit in all areas of life in the long run. If I conclude that cheating has occurred on any assignment, it will result in a failing grade for the assignment (0%), a meeting with me, and informing both the Academic Dean and the Executive Director of Student Development for further disciplinary action (which could result in failure of the class or dismissal from the college).
- **Plagiarism** – Don't do this either! Like cheating, simply *stealing* someone else's work is always a temptation, but in this age of information, the ability to detect plagiarism is becoming easier and easier. So please don't think: "Oh, I won't get caught," because, inevitably, you will get caught. Just to be clear on the definition of plagiarism, here is a simple definition to work from: *The submission of material (in whole or in part) as your own work that is not your own work without proper citation, quotation, and/or appropriate documentation.* Like cheating, any accounts of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment (0%), a meeting with me, and informing both the Academic Dean and the Executive Director of Student Development for further disciplinary action (which could result in failure of the class or dismissal from the college).

Ozark Christian College contracted with iParadigms, LLC for Turnitin® services to be used at the instructor's discretion. The Originality Check service allows students to submit a paper through Canvas to check for improper citation and potential plagiarism before it is submitted to the instructor. The Peer Review service allows students to submit assignments anonymously to peers for editing and feedback. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on Turnitin.com.

- **Attendance** – Be here every day for class, ready to not only learn, but to engage in dialog with me throughout the lectures. If you are absent more than 8 times in this class, you will fail this course (see pp. 58-59 of the OCC Catalog). Your attendance and participation in class will be factored into your final grade.
- **Late Work** – This is virtually an oxymoron for my classes. Late work is not tolerated. The dates are clearly communicated for you so that you can plan accordingly to turn in your work on time. Even if you are absent on the day in which an assignment is due, you are still expected to turn the assignment to me on the day it is due at the beginning of the class hour. (See "Memory Work" below).

- **Cell Phones** – All cell phones must be turned off before class begins. That means, no phone calls, text messages, or other forms of communication indicative of current cell phones will be tolerated in class.
 - **Electronics** – No “screens” (e.g., computers, tablets, etc.) are allowed in my classroom.
 - **Assignments** – All assignments must be turned in via Canvas. ALSO, all assignments are: double spaced, 1” margins, 12 point font, Times New Romans, Turabian format.
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Text Books:

Brother Yun, *Living Water* (Zondervan, 2008).

Mark E. Moore, *Acts* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2011).

Class Schedule:

Date	Topic	Assignments Due:	Date	Topic	Assignment
8/23	Introduction		10/25	14:1-20	
8/24	Introduction		10/26	14:21-28	Memory Work: 13:46-48
8/25	Background pt. 1		10/27	15:1-21	
8/26	Background pt. 2	Memory Work: 1:6-8	10/28	15:22-41	Write an Outline
8/30	Background pt. 3		11/1	16:1-15	
8/31	1:1-3	Read Acts	11/2	16:16-40	Memory Work: 15:28-29
9/1	1:1-3 (pt. 2)		11/3	17:1-15	
9/2	Acts 1:4-11	Select Your Text for the Scripture Research Paper	11/4	17:16-34	"In What Chapter" Quiz #2: Acts 10-18
9/6	1:12-26		11/8	18:1-28	
9/7	2:1-13	Memory Work: 2:1-4	11/9	Test #3: Ch. 11-18	Test #3: Ch. 12-18
9/8	2:14-36		11/10	19:1-22	
9/9	2:14-36 pt. 2	"In What Chapter" Quiz #1: Acts 1-9	11/11	19:23-41	
9/13	2:37-47		11/15	20:1-38	
9/14	3:1-26	Memory Work: 2:37-39	11/16	21:1-26	
9/15	3:1-26 pt. 2		11/17	21:27-22:29	Scripture Research Paper
9/16	Test #1: Ch. 1-3	Test #1: Ch. 1-3	11/18	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
9/20	Writing a SRP		11/22	THANKSGIVING BREAK	THANKSGIVING BREAK
9/21	4:1-31 pt. 1		11/23	THANKSGIVING BREAK	THANKSGIVING BREAK
9/22	4:1-31 pt. 2		11/24	THANKSGIVING BREAK	THANKSGIVING BREAK
9/23	4:32-5:11	Research your Passage	11/25	THANKSGIVING BREAK	THANKSGIVING BREAK
9/27	5:12-42		11/29	22:30-23:35	
9/28	6:1-15		11/30	24:1-27	Memory Work: 17:30-31
9/29	7:1-60 pt. 1	Memory Work: 7:51-53	12/1	25:1-22	
9/30	7:1-60 pt. 2		12/2	25:23-26:32	"In What Chapter" Quiz #3: Acts 19-28
10/4	8:1-25		12/6	27:1-26	
10/5	8:26-40		12/7	27:27-44	
10/6	9:1-19a		12/8	28:1-16	
10/7	9:19b-43	Conversion Chart	12/9	28:17-31	Test #4: Ch. 19-26
10/11	10:1-23a		12/14	Final Exam	Devotional Book Report
10/12	Test #2: Ch. 4-10	Test #2: Ch. 4-10			
10/13	10:23b-11:				
10/14	11:19-30				
10/18	12:1-25				
10/19	13:1-12	Submit a Thesis			
10/20	SKIP DAY	SKIP DAY			
10/21	13:13-52				

Assignments:

- **Memory Work (15%)**
 - On the days in which memory work is assigned, you will come into class and immediately begin writing the memory work on a blank sheet of paper.
 - You may choose any version of the Bible to memorize and reproduce, because you will be grading it yourself.
 - After you finish writing out the entire passage from memory, you will *then* get out your Bible and grade the passage yourself.
 - Every word will be worth 1 point—which means if you leave out a word, add a word, or do not get the word right (i.e., making something singular that should be plural) you will miss one point each.
 - You should not count punctuation.
 - “*What if I Miss a Memory Work?*”
 - If you miss a memory work in class, then you have 1 week from the date it was to be taken to make it up in the Learning Center.
 - Simply go to the Learning Center, fill out the memory work on a blank piece of paper, and after completely writing the text, grade the memory work with your Bible.
 - If you are present in class, however, and you simply forgot or are not prepared to take the memory work, you will **not** be allowed to make it up in the Learning Center. The Learning Center provision is **only** for those that miss class (i.e., absent from the class that day).

- **Read Acts (5%)**
 - For this assignment, you will need to read through the entire book of Acts *in one sitting*.
 - You do NOT need to take any notes, make any citations, or do any research for this assignment—just simply read the entire book without any interruptions (think 1-2 hours).
 - This assignment will either be a 100% or a 0%.

- **“In What Chapter?” Quizzes (5%)**
 - These quizzes will challenge you to identify specific events, persons, phrases, etc. from specific chapters in Acts.
 - You will receive an event or detail from a chapter, and you will be required to write the appropriate chapter number beside it.
 - On the day of the quiz, I will distribute the quiz and then you fill in the blanks with the appropriate answer.
 - You do not grade these—you will turn them in and I will grade them.

- **Tests (10%)**
 - The tests will be used to measure your comprehension and ability to engage with the text of the book of Acts.
 - For each test, you will need: [1] a Pencil and [2] a Grade Master Sheet.
 - The tests will include a variety of questions: multiple choice, matching, T/F, etc.
 - All of the tests will be over the material covered in class with a specific focus on the BIBLICAL TEXT itself.

- **Conversion Chart (15%)**
 - The purpose of this assignment is to have you engage the respective divine and human roles in the salvation process—as witnessed in the book of Acts.
 - [1] *The Conversion Chart*—on page 8 below, you will find a conversion chart with a set of passages and instructions. Fill out the conversion chart and turn it in with the essay.

- For **one** commentary, describe in 75-100 words the perspective, contribution, and overall value of the source for your study.
 - [2] *Journal Articles*
 - In appropriate Turabian bibliographic format, list **two** different journal articles.
 - For **one** journal article, summarize in 75-100 words the overall argument of the author.
 - [3] *Bible Encyclopedias/Dictionaries*
 - In appropriate Turabian bibliographic format, list **two** different Bible Encyclopedias or Dictionaries.
 - Look up one entry in **each source** that is pertinent to your text and summarize in 100-125 words how the entries compare/contrast in the **two different Bible Encyclopedias or Dictionaries**.
- **Submit a Thesis (2.5%)**
 - Based on your research of the passage, submit a one sentence thesis that summarizes the purpose of your Scripture Research Paper.
 - Below the thesis statement, explain your thesis in 100-125 words.
- **Write an Outline (2.5%)**
 - Based on your research of the passage and your thesis statement, create a “developed” outline of your entire Scripture Research Paper.
 - The outline should show the flow of thought that supports and defends your stated thesis.
 - **Include your (revised?) thesis at the top of the outline.**
- **Devotional Book Report (10%)**
 - You are to read, Brother Yun, *Living Water* and write a book report with the elements listed below.
 - The report should include:
 - [1] A confessional statement with % of the book that you read (I want an actual number).
 - [2] Answer this question (250-300 words): Based on the challenges in this book, what is one point that you think Brother Yun would emphasize for your home church (if you do not have a home church, then the church you most recently attended)?
 - [3] Answer this question (200-225 words): What do you think Brother Yun would challenge you personally with?
 - [4] Answer this question: In one sentence, summarize Brother Yun’s message to the Western church?
- **Final Exam (10%)**
 - The final exam will be a comprehensive exam over the entire book of Acts.
 - You will want to study previous tests, “In What Chapter” quizzes, look over your class notes, and read over the entire book of Acts.

Grading

The official OCC grading scale will be followed for the student's mid-term and final grades:

%	Grade	%	Grade
95-100	A	79-82	C
93-94	A-	77-78	C-
91-92	B+	75-76	D+
87-90	B	72-74	D
85-86	B-	70-71	D-
83-84	C+	0-69	F

The Final grades for this class will be based on the following percentages of the assignments described above.

Assignment	%
Memory Work	15%
Read Acts	5%
"In What Chapter?" Quizzes	5%
Tests	10%
Conversion Chart	15%
Scripture Research Paper	20%
Select Your Text for the SRP	2.5%
Research your Passage	2.5%
Submit a Thesis	2.5%
Write an Outline	2.5%
Devotional Book Report	10%
Final Exam	10%
TOTAL	100%

CONVERSIONS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

In the boxes below, write in the verses from the passage that specifically mention one of the elements of conversion. If a certain element of conversion is not specifically mentioned in the passage, leave the box blank. Then write an essay answering the Reflection Questions at the bottom of this page.

	Preaching/ Teaching	Repent	Believe	Obey	Baptism	Water	Holy Spirit	Scripture	Miracles	Joy/Awe	God's Choice
2:14-47*											
3:17-4:4											
5:12-16											
6:7											
8:5-13											
8:26-39											
9:1-18; 22; 26											
9:34-35											
10:30-11:18											
11:19-24											
13:11-12											
13:46-48											
16:14-15											
16:29-34											
17:1-4											
17:10-12											
17:22-34											
18:8											
19:1-7											

Reflection Questions: (to be answered in a 700-750 word essay)

- What does this study reveal about the divine side of conversion? (What does God do?)
- What does this study reveal about the human side of conversion? (What do/should/must we do?)
- What does this study reveal about the meaning of baptism and its place in conversion?
- What else did you learn about conversion from doing this exercise?

Acts Scripture Research Paper

Purpose

The goal of this assignment is to unpack a scripture passage from the book of Acts and produce an in-depth Scripture Research Paper.

Specifically, in this paper, you are to accurately and thoroughly explain a passage (from the list below) from the perspective of the first-century reader—i.e., *what Luke intended to communicate to his readers through this particular text*. [**Suggestion:** Use the class lectures a general guide for how to engage the text and how to explore its meaning.]

Step 1: Pick a Text

You will need to select a text from the list of passages below. You may choose to focus on a smaller portion of the texts listed below (i.e., instead of doing all of Acts 1:1-11 you may choose to do just Acts 1:1-3), but you may not do a larger section. In addition, if you choose a smaller portion of the text, you still must meet the page number requirements.

- Acts 1:1-11
- Acts 2:1-13
- Acts 2:36-47
- Acts 8:26-40
- Acts 9:1-19
- Acts 10:24-48
- Acts 15:1-21
- Acts 16:16-40
- Acts 17:16-34
- Acts 19:23-41
- Acts 20:13-38
- Acts 28:17-31

Step 2: Research your Passage

In good biblical research, there are certain sources that are more appropriate (and helpful) than others. The key to writing a good paper is separating the “good” resources from the “bad.” For example, it is inappropriate in a formal research paper to quote/cite the website that pulled up after you googled your passage—the author may not be reliable, the information may not be accurate, and it is virtually impossible to regulate the vast amount of web pages that appear on a daily basis. Therefore, the following resources should be used to research and write your paper.

You are to have no fewer than 10 different sources cited in your paper (and listed in your bibliography) and they must correspond to the following categories:

- *Commentaries* (**no fewer than 4**)
 - A commentary is a verse-by-verse study on the entire book of the Bible you are studying. So, the author will write a page or two on Acts 2:38, and then move on to another paragraph or two on Acts 2:39 and following.
 - As a result, finding your passage in the commentary is easy and quite helpful in synthesizing the major issues of your text.
 - For Acts, you can find the commentaries in our library in the General Stacks at 226.6 and thereabouts.

- **Journal Articles (no fewer than 2)**
 - A journal article is published in a periodical that comes out only a couple of times per year or so. Each article is around 10-25 pages (or so) and focuses in-depth attention to a small section of scripture.
 - As a result, your passage will receive much more detailed (and more up-to-date) discussion than what is provided in your commentary reading.
 - For journal articles, you need to use EBSCOhost. You can access it online here: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?authtype=uid>. The Username is: s6474988. The Password is: pass4321.
 - Like any google search, type in your passage and/or other combinations of searches in order to generate good journal articles that can help you write your paper. If you have any questions, you can go to [1] the library, [2] the Learning Center, or [3] your wonderful professor.
- **Bible Encyclopedias/Dictionaries (no fewer than 2)**
 - A Bible Encyclopedia or Bible Dictionary is good for short articles (most of the time) on specific elements in the text. For example, if you if you are working on Acts 19:1-19, then you could look up “Ephesus” in the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* and get good information on the city in particular.
 - Thus Bible dictionaries give you detailed information on details or background topics that pertain to your text that a commentary may not have time to develop.
 - Good Bible Encyclopedias and Dictionaries include (but are not limited to): *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (IVP), and *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments* (IVP).

When using these sources in your paper, you must show **good documentation** and evidence of good research in both your notes and in your bibliography. Good documentation means if you are getting information from any source, you must tell what your source is. It really doesn't matter if you are directly quoting them or you are just relating the data; either way you must document your source. In addition, having varied sources and not simply leaning always on a single source will help your grade.

Step 3: Develop a Thesis

A research paper is not just a list of facts or a retelling of the story found in your text. The purpose of the paper is to articulate and argue for a clear point. Or to put it another way: the purpose of the paper is to develop and defend your thesis.

So what is a thesis? Basically, based on your research, do your best to summarize the meaning of the verse in one sentence—that is your thesis. Thesis statements should be simple, clear, focused, and they should make a point that can be proven right or wrong. Here are some examples of exegetical thesis statements:

- In Philippians 2.5-11, Paul defines the proper Christian attitude by narrating the selflessness of Christ as displayed in the twin actions of giving up his deity to become human and humbling himself so low as to be put to death on a cross.
- In Revelation 13.1-10, John calls the churches in Asia Minor to patiently endure hardship by exposing the Roman Empire as part of a satanic attempt to usurp God's throne by enticing their worship and allegiance.

Think about it like this: If you had to start writing the paper today and turn it in tomorrow, what would you say about what this text means? Or another way to think about it is to answer the question: If my passage was not in the book of Acts, what would be missing? Your answer to these questions (in one sentence) will guide you to your thesis—i.e., the summarized argument of your paper.

Step 4: Write an Outline

After your research and after writing a clear, concise thesis statement, gather your notes and begin to organize your thoughts in an outline form. This step is almost as important as developing a thesis. Basically you're asking: What is the best way to prove my point or build my case? How can I organize the information so that the reader can follow my argument and in the end believe what I'm saying?

This is when you look at all the information you have collected and start to determine where it best fits within your argument. Sometimes you will walk through the text verse-by-verse, but other times you might arrange things differently. (For example, you might start with background info, then clarify a few key words, then give an informed overview, then focus in on the section that makes or breaks your thesis.)

Outlines should be arranged by main points and sub-points under your main points. The whole thing should be structured in whatever way best proves your thesis. See the example below of part of an outline for a made-up paper on Acts 19:1-41 (NOTE: Your final outline will be a lot more detailed than this, but this gives an idea of how it progresses).

I. The City of Ephesus
A. Commerce and Idolatry
B. The Artemis Cult
II. Events Leading Up to Artemis Conflict (Acts 19:1-22)
A. John's Baptism Insufficient (1-7)
B. Paul Ministers in Word and Deed (8-12)
C. Sceva's Sons Abuse and Lose (13-22)
III. Demetrius and Artemis vs. Paul and Jesus (Acts 19:23-41)

In working through the outline, focus on the *how* question. Start with your actual text: *How* does the author go about making his point? Then ask the same question of yourself: *How* should I go about making my point? Sometimes your *how* may look different than the author's *how*, but there are often parallels.

Step 5: Write your Scripture Research Paper

Now you are ready to begin writing! Your paper should include the following elements, in this order:

- [1] **Title page** (see sample below)
- [2] **Table of Contents** (include thesis statement at top)
- [3] **Body of Content** (7-9 pages)
- [4] **Bibliography of Works Cited** (no fewer than 10 sources—see Step 2 above)

To be clear, the body of your paper (which does NOT include the title page, table of contents, or bibliography) must be 7-9 pages – NO shorter and NO longer.

In addition, there are some specific guidelines regarding several components of your Scripture Research Paper that you are required to do: [1] General Formatting, [2] Citation(s), [3] Body of the Text Formatting, and [4] Bibliography Formatting.

- **[1] General Formatting Guidelines**
 - 1” margins all around the paper.
 - Left justify text.
 - Use Times New Roman, 12 pt. font for the body of the text.
 - Page numbers should be on the top right of the page AND should include the last name (e.g., DeFazio 1).
 - No page numbers on the title page (see sample below).

- **[2] Citation(s) Guidelines**
 - Use footnotes for citations (no parenthetical citations and no endnotes).
 - Notes should [1] have the first line indented, [2] be single spaced within an entry, and [3] should have a blank line placed between each entry.
 - Your footnotes should be Times New Roman, 10 pt. font.
 - See sample below.

- **[3] Body of the Text Formatting Guidelines**
 - Body of paper should be double spaced.
 - Use Times New Roman, 12 pt. font for the body of the text.
 - Block quotes should only be used for quotes over 4 lines of text, and they should be single spaced and all of the text indented .5” from the left (see sample below).
 - Use headings and subheadings throughout the paper to organize your information.
 - Headings should appear as follows: centered, boldface or italic type, and headline-style capitalization (i.e., only key words—not “a,” “the,” etc. unless they are the beginning word of the title).
 - Sub-headings should appear as follows: Flush left, boldface or italic type, sentence-style capitalization, with one space before the heading—separating it from the previous text.

- **[4] Bibliography Formatting Guidelines**
 - Place the word Bibliography at the top of the page, centered, and boldfaced.
 - Single space within each entry, but put a blank line between each entry.
 - Use a hanging indent for entries that run over one line (see sample below).
 - Order the entries in alphabetical order according to the author’s last name.
 - Do not list the Bible on the Bibliography page. It should only be included in the notes throughout the body of the text (see sample below).
 - You should, however, footnote your first Scripture reference identifying which translation you are using (see sample below).
 - These must be sources that you actually cite in the paper. A multi-volume reference counts as a single reference.

Other Important Information:

- **PRACTICAL ADVICE:**

- Do not write this off the top of your head. Do the research.
 - Please do not simply retell the passage in your own words making your own comments on it. I know you can say good things about the text, but tell me what you have discovered from your research.
 - Work ahead on this project. It is worth more than your final!
 - Be sure to edit your first draft! Have another student read it over, or take it to the Learning Center—they would be glad to help you.
 - Do not use personal pronouns (I, me, my, etc.) in a formal paper.
 - Please do NOT put your paper in a cover. Simply staple your pages together.
 - Remember, good writing involves more than just the listing of facts. Good research involves going beyond simply stating what it says. Good research involves asking what it means. Summarize your findings and give me some of your own conclusions.
- **Grading Specifications**
 - In grading, several components contribute to your overall grade:
 - (1) **Content** – Is the argument clear and well-argued? Is it a fair representation of the issues and insights evident in the text?
 - (2) **Research** – Does the paper demonstrate thorough research from a range of sources? Does the paper balance its utilization of the sources?
 - (3) **Grammar** – Is the paper riddled with punctuation, spelling, or grammatical mistakes? Is the paper communicated clearly and responsibly for a formal research paper?
 - (4) **Format** – Does the paper match the aforementioned formatting specifications? Are citations, margins, headings, bibliography, etc. all compliant to the Turabian format?
 - Your grade does not reflect what I think of you. For you are far more valuable to me and the kingdom than what is reflected in a Letter—either A or F.

TITLE OF PAPER CENTERED HERE

(2" from top of the page)

by

[Centered vertically on page at 5.5" with only one space between "by" and your name]

Student's Full Legal Name

(example: Lucinda Lou Bates Ornduff)

A paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

Course number and name of course *[e.g., NT 150: Acts]*

Professor's name *[e.g., Dr. Chris DeWelt]*

[This is centered 3 spaces after the student's name and 3 spaces before the School's name]

Ozark Christian College

Joplin, Missouri

Date submitted

[NOTE: Title pages are not numbered]

Introduction

In Acts 17:1ff, Paul and his companions had just been beaten for the gospel in Philippi before being asked to leave. While traveling the Via Egnatia,¹ Paul targeted Thessalonica² with the gospel. As was Paul's custom, he preached in the synagogue to the Jewish community. His message persuaded some Jews, "a large number of God-fearing Greeks, and not a few prominent women" (Acts 17:4).³ This infringement upon the Jewish community caused a series of persecutions⁴ against the Christian community in Thessalonica. Perceiving Paul's message to be in conflict with Rome, the Jews stirred up trouble by bringing the Christians before the politarchs claiming, "They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus" (Acts 17:7). As a result, Paul was expelled from the city, leaving the Christian community to fight a losing battle for their new belief.

But was the accusation by the Jews legitimate? Was Paul's message to Thessalonica political? Did it conflict with Roman ideology? Indeed, Paul's message promotes an alternative kingdom, king, and peace, which violates not only Roman ideology but also Roman decrees.

Catalyst for Persecution: Paul's Political Message

In 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 Paul describes an alternative kingdom, "For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting, and

¹ This is a major Roman road extending 530 miles from modern day Istanbul to Dyrrhachium on the Adriatic Sea.

² Thessalonica was established in 316 B.C. by a Hellenistic general named Cassander and named after his wife, the half-sister of Alexander the Great. Thessalonica was named the capital city of the new Roman province in 146 B.C. due to its key location at the head of a bay and on an international highway.

³ All scriptures are from the *New International Version*, unless otherwise noted.

⁴ Persecution against Christians comes from various agents, i.e. Jews, Romans, Politarchs, etc. The persecution occurs in a two-fold manner: tangible persecution and intangible persecution. For more discussion, see pp. 7-9 below.

urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his *kingdom* and glory.”⁵ The offer to align with a kingdom other than the Roman Empire would have been considered quite contentious. Parties subject to Roman rule had a responsibility to prove their allegiance to Rome by passionately opposing any mention of an alternate authority or kingdom. For instance, in order to merely do business with the empire, the Paphlagonians were forced to swear the following oath to Rome:

I swear...that I will support Caesar Augustus, his children and descendants, throughout my life, in word, deed and thought...that in whatsoever concerns them I will spare neither body nor soul nor life nor children...that whenever I see or hear of anything being said, planned or done against them I will report it...and whomsoever they regard as enemies I will attack and pursue with arms and the sword by land and by sea...⁶

The zeal to protect the Roman Empire against other kingdoms can hardly be underestimated. Its subjects were expected to use all means necessary to protect the glory of Rome.

In addition, Paul commends the Thessalonians for their allegiance to the kingdom of God displayed in the turning “to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thess 1:9).⁷ From the society’s perspective, this action was extraordinarily arrogant and a complete rejection of the status quo in the Roman Empire.⁸ Indeed, the rejection of imperial idols was considered atheism and a threat to the stability of the Roman Empire, because, “It alienated the gods upon whom the well-being of the empire depended.”⁹ These actions combined with the blatant

⁵ *Emphasis* added. Cf. 2 Thess. 1:5.

⁶ Quoted in E.A. Judge, “The Decrees of Caesar at Thessalonica,” *RTR* 30 (1971): 6.

⁷ Cf. 1 Pet 4:3-4 and Tac., *Ann.* 15.44.

⁸ Peter Oakes, “Re-mapping the Universe: Paul and the Emperor in 1 Thessalonians and Philippians,” *JSNT* 27.3 (2005): 309, notes, “Any movement that challenged the status quo of the social structure would, to some extent, be challenging Rome.”

⁹ C.G. Kruse, “Persecution,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (eds. Craig Evans and Stanley Porter; Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 776. See also D.A. deSilva, “Ruler Cult,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (ed. Craig Evans and Stanley Porter; Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 1026; J.R. Harrison, “Paul and the

proclamation of the kingdom of God would have isolated the Christians as a subversive group dedicated to ideals counter to Roman ideology and society.¹⁰

Imperial Gospel at Thessaloniki,” *JSNT* 25.1 (2002): 78-79; K.P. Donfried and I. Howard Marshall, *The Theology of the Shorter Pauline Letters* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 59; K.P. Donfried, “The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonian Correspondence,” *NTS* 31 (1985): 336-356; E.R. Richards, “Ministering in a Tough Place: Paul's Pattern in Thessalonica,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 42 (1999): 17-38; Justin, *1 Apol.* 6; *2 Apol.* 3.

¹⁰ See David M. Bossman, “Paul’s Mediterranean Gospel: Faith, Hope, Love,” *BTB* 25.2 (1995): 71.

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¹ David P. Kiger, “Follicles and Fables: The Role of Facial Hair in the Tales that Shaped Western Morality and Eastern Philosophy,” *JMA* 17 (2012): 45.

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5. You can find information on the correct use of *ibid* in Turabian, p. 155.

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