ATLA Religion Database - Frequently Asked Questions

The ATLA Religion Database (and ATLASerials) provides information on topics such as biblical studies, world religions, church history, and religion in social issues—making it an essential resource for studies in theology, as well as in social sciences, history and humanities. Journals are selected for inclusion according to their scholarly merit and scope.

General FAQs

- When using the ATLA database, what does VE (verse) search?
- Where can I find a title list for ATLA?
- Which Title List on the ATLA Website provides coverage for the ATLA Serials (ATLAS) database on EBSCOhost?
- Is it possible to obtain statistics for ATLAS?

Scripture FAQs

- What books are included in the Scripture authority in the ATLA databases?
- What is the difference between the Scripture Reference and the Scripture Citation in the ATLA databases?
- Why do some of entries in the Scripture Authority yield no results?
- I've noticed that Scripture references in the print version of Old Testament Abstracts don't always appear in the online version. Why might this happen?

Q. When using the ATLA database, what does VE (verse) search?

The Verse (VE) field searches numerals, though without a book name the numbers are not meaningful.

The VE field searches for biblical verse through the number if you do not have the book name. If you have the book and verse number, you can search through Scripture Citation (SC)

Field descriptions and search examples are detailed in database-specific Help, which can be accessed by clicking on the More info link from the Choose Databases screen in EBSCOhost.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Technical Support.

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Q. Where can I find a title list for ATLA?

The ATLA database is a secondary database available on EBSCOhost. Secondary database indicates that EBSCO has been licensed to use the database content from another publisher. Title lists for ATLA are made available by the American Theological Library Association at the ATLA Web Site.

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Q. Which Title List on the ATLA Website provides coverage for the ATLA Serials (ATLAS) database on EBSCOhost?

The “ATLA Religion Database (ATLA RDB) comprehensive coverage” contains the bibliographic coverage and the list labeled “ATLA Serials (ATLAS)” contains the Full Text coverage information. To obtain the full scope of all coverage, both title lists should be reviewed.

Q. Is it possible to obtain statistics for ATLAS?

EBSCOhost provides statistics for the number of times a user accesses PDF Full Text available from the ATLAS database as well as the full text via the Linked Full Text link and any Custom Links. After performing a search, when the user selects a Linked Full Text link from the Result List, s/he is connected to another EBSCOhost database that has full text, or to full text in the Library's EJS account. Both these actions will be recorded as a Smartlink on their statistics.

- SmartLinking to another database records the full text statistic for the database to which the article links, not to ATLA.
- Custom Links statistics are recorded when patrons link out to their Library site, or any other custom link site that may have been set up in their account in EBSCOadmin. This does not include the ATLA link.

Q. What books are included in the Scripture authority in the ATLA databases?

The Scriptures authority file is a hierarchal, browsable list of the bible presented in Protestant canonical order from Genesis through Revelation for the ATLA Religion Database, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials and ATLASerials Religion Collection.

The Protestant canonical book ordering present in the Scriptures authority file allows for retrieval of the majority of scripture references assigned to records within the databases. Currently, the Revised Standard Version (RSV) bible is used to assign standard scripture heading forms in ATLA’s index records (i.e. if an article refers to a chapter or verse in a different version or canon of the bible, the corresponding scripture content is found in the RSV. The RSV book name, chapter and verse numbers are then used to create the scripture reference for that article record).

Historically, the index records created for the ATLA Religion Database focused chiefly on Protestant materials; however, there are a small number of scripture references for books outside of the Protestant canon that were assigned to index records earlier in the databases' history. Records indexed with books not found in the scripture authority file may be found using the Scripture Citation (SC) search index or by browsing the Scripture Citation (ZP) index via the Indexes authority.

Q. What is the difference between the Scripture Reference and the Scripture Citation in the ATLA databases?
The Scripture Reference is based on the scripture citations indexing included in the ATLA religion database citations. The scripture references allow a user to search for any single book chapter or verse within the scripture citation range.

For example, if a user searches for Acts 1:5 they will return records with a scripture citation of Acts 1:5 as well as record Acts 1:1-11 or Acts 1:1-15:35.

Users may search scripture reference values by using the scripture authority, or by constructing a command line search with the “SR” search tag. Command line searches book “chapter number” : “verse number” format.

Q. Why do some of entries in the Scripture Authority yield no results?

The Scripture Authority includes all books, chapters and verses of the protestant bible. It is not derived from the scripture citations found in the database. If the ATLA has not indexed any records with a specific chapter or verse at the time of your search, that search may return no results. In this way it acts much like some subject specific thesauri. Just as a thesaurus may contain a term that has not been used to index any records, the scripture authority may contain chapters and verses that will be used to index records in the future, when appropriate.

Q. I’ve noticed that Scripture references in the print version of Old Testament Abstracts don't always appear in the online version. Why might this happen?

ATLA is aware that more Scripture Citations may appear in the print version of Old Testament Abstracts (OTA) than in the electronic version.

When ATLA receives the Old Testament Abstracts electronic records from the Catholic Biblical Association (CBA), they contain standard formatting for what is designated as a Scripture Citation. ATLA pulls this data into the Scripture Reference field in the MARC records that are created. However, ATLA does not pull references to Scriptures that occur in the title of a citation or in an abstract itself or in other parts of the record that are not formatted by CBA to be specific Scripture Citations.

ATLA is considering various options that are available to resolve the differences between the print and the electronic Scripture Citations, and will provide more information when available.