



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

Important Greek Words for New Testament Readers

A Beginner-Friendly Guide to Words That Help Open the New Testament

The Short Answer

The New Testament was written primarily in Koine Greek, the common Greek of the first-century eastern Mediterranean world. Learning important Greek words can help readers notice repeated themes, understand translation differences, and study familiar passages more carefully. But Greek is not a secret code. Good English translations faithfully communicate Scripture, and a word's meaning must be determined by its sentence, paragraph, book, historical setting, grammar, and larger biblical context. Greek words can have semantic ranges: *pistis* can communicate faith, trust, or faithfulness; *pneuma* can mean Spirit, spirit, wind, or breath; *sarx* can mean flesh, human existence, descent, weakness, or rebellious humanity depending on context. The New Testament also inherits rich biblical vocabulary through the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament. This study introduces about 40 important Greek words and word families connected with God, Jesus, salvation, discipleship, love, sin, repentance, atonement, reconciliation, the Spirit, Church, adoption, Kingdom, resurrection, and hope. Strong's numbers help locate lexical entries; they do not define verses. The goal is not simply vocabulary. It is becoming a more careful reader of Scripture.

John 1:1-18 · Mark 1:14-15 · Romans 3:21-26 · Romans 5:1-11 · Ephesians 2:8-10 · 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Opening Memory Anchor

Greek is a tool for understanding Scripture more carefully - not a shortcut around Scripture.



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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Each entry gives a Greek word, transliteration, simple pronunciation, Strong's number, common meaning, and key Scripture. Pronunciations are intentionally simple recognition guides. Greek words have semantic ranges, so an English gloss is a starting point rather than a definition to insert everywhere. Pistis can mean faith, trust, faithfulness, or reliability; pneuma can mean spirit, Spirit, wind, or breath; kyrios can mean Lord, master, or sir; sarx can mean flesh, physical existence, descent, weakness, or rebellious humanity. The safest question is not, 'What does this word always mean?' but, 'What is this word communicating here?'

PART ONE

BEGINNER GUIDE

GOD AND JESUS

1. THEOS - θεός

Pronunciation: theh-OSS Strong's: G2316 Common Meaning: God / god Key Scripture: John 1:1; John 3:16

Theos is the ordinary Greek word translated 'God' or, depending on context, 'god.' John 1 begins by saying the Word was with God and was God. The word itself does not contain everything Christian theology teaches about God; its significance comes from how Scripture uses it. The New Testament identifies the God proclaimed by Jesus and the apostles with the God of Israel revealed in the Old Testament.

2. LOGOS - λόγος

Pronunciation: LOH-goss Strong's: G3056 Common Meaning: Word / Message / Statement / Account Key Scripture: John 1:1-18

Logos has a broad range: word, message, statement, matter, account, or speech. John 1 gives it extraordinary significance: the Logos was with God, was God, was active in creation, became flesh, and revealed the Father. First-century Jewish and Greco-Roman readers knew philosophical uses of logos, including Stoic and Philonic discussions. Those backgrounds may illuminate the environment, but John's meaning should be governed primarily by John's Gospel and the biblical story. John's Logos is not merely a principle. The Word becomes flesh. The Word is Jesus.

Bible-Study Safeguard

Background information can illuminate a biblical word, but it should not replace the meaning the biblical author establishes in the passage.

3. KYRIOS - κύριος

Pronunciation: KOO-ree-oss Strong's: G2962 Common Meaning: Lord / Master / Sir Key Scripture: Romans 10:9-13; Philippians 2:9-11

Kyrios can mean lord, master, owner, or respectful 'sir.' It carries extraordinary significance because the Greek Old Testament frequently uses kyrios where the Hebrew text contains YHWH. Romans 10:13 quotes Joel 2:32: everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. New Testament applications of LORD passages to Jesus can therefore carry major Christological weight. See Study #248 for the Hebrew names of God.

4. CHRISTOS - Χριστός

Pronunciation: krees-TOSS Strong's: G5547 Common Meaning: Christ / Anointed One / Messiah Key Scripture: Matthew 16:16; John 20:31

Christos corresponds to the Hebrew concept behind Mashiach, 'anointed one.' Christ is not Jesus' last name; it is a title. Jesus Christ means Jesus the Messiah. Across the Old Testament storyline, expectation develops around God's promised anointed King, and the New Testament identifies Jesus as that Messiah. See Study #247 for Mashiach.

5. IĒSOUS - Ἰησοῦς

Pronunciation: ee-ay-SOOS Strong's: G2424 Common Meaning: Jesus / Joshua Key Scripture: Matthew 1:21

Iēsous is the Greek form used for Jesus' name, corresponding to the Hebrew/Aramaic name associated with Yeshua and ultimately Yehoshua, often represented in English as Joshua. Matthew 1:21 connects Jesus' name with His saving mission. Its significance comes from who He is and what Scripture says He came to accomplish, not hidden meanings in Greek letters.

Memory Anchor

'Jesus Christ' means Jesus the Messiah - the promised Anointed King.

THE GOSPEL AND SALVATION

6. EUANGELION - εὐαγγέλιον

Pronunciation: yoo-ang-GEH-lee-on Strong's: G2098 Common Meaning: Gospel / Good News Key Scripture: Mark 1:14-15; Romans 1:16

Euangelion means good news or good announcement. In the New Testament, the Gospel is not merely advice about becoming better. It is the good news of what God has done through Jesus Christ. First Corinthians 15:1-8 centers it on Jesus' death for sins, burial, resurrection, and appearances. The Gospel calls for repentance and faith.

7. CHARIS - χάρις

Pronunciation: KHAH-rees Strong's: G5485 Common Meaning: Grace / Favor / Gift Key Scripture: Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 2:11

Charis can mean grace, favor, graciousness, or gift. In Gospel contexts it emphasizes God's undeserved favor and generosity toward sinners. Ephesians 2:8-10 teaches salvation by grace through faith, not human works, and immediately says those saved by grace are created in Christ for good works. Grace does not make faithful living unnecessary; it creates a new basis for it.

8. SŌZŌ - σώζω

Pronunciation: SOHD-zoh Strong's: G4982 Common Meaning: Save / Rescue / Heal / Deliver Key Scripture: Matthew 1:21; Romans 10:9

Sōzō has a wider range than the English theological word 'save.' Depending on context, it may describe rescue, deliverance, healing, preservation, or salvation. Context determines whether a passage concerns physical rescue, healing, spiritual salvation, or another kind of deliverance.

9. SŌTĒRIA - σωτηρία

Pronunciation: soh-tay-REE-ah Strong's: G4991 Common Meaning: Salvation / Deliverance Key Scripture: Luke 2:30; Acts 4:12

Sōtēria is the noun commonly translated 'salvation.' Biblical salvation includes rescue from sin and judgment and restoration to God. Acts 4:12 centers salvation in Jesus. Christian salvation is not self-improvement; God rescues sinners who cannot rescue themselves.

10. DIKAIOSYNĒ - δικαιοσύνη

Pronunciation: dee-kai-oh-SOO-nay Strong's: G1343 Common Meaning: Righteousness / Justice Key Scripture: Matthew 6:33; Romans 3:21-22

Dikaiosynē can communicate righteousness, justice, or what is right. Romans uses it extensively when explaining God's righteousness and the right standing He provides in Christ. Matthew often uses it for life aligned with God's will. A dictionary should not force every occurrence into exactly the same theological formula.

11. DIKAIŌΘ - δικαίω

Pronunciation: dee-kai-AH-oh Strong's: G1344 Common Meaning: Justify / Declare Righteous / Vindicate Key Scripture: Romans 3:26-28; Romans 5:1

Dikaiōθ belongs to the same word family as dikaiosynē. In important Pauline passages it describes being justified before God. Romans 5:1 says believers have been justified by faith and have peace with God through Jesus Christ. Elsewhere it can carry nuances such as vindication or showing someone to be in the right. The passage must determine the sense.

12. APOLYTRŌSIS - ἀπολύτρωσις

Pronunciation: ah-poh-LOO-troh-sis Strong's: G629 Common Meaning: Redemption / Release Key Scripture: Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7

Apolýtrōsis belongs to release or redemption language. Ephesians 1:7 connects redemption in Christ with forgiveness. This develops Old Testament themes in which God redeems His people from slavery and danger. Jesus brings the biblical theme of redemption to its saving fulfillment.

13. KATALLAGĒ / KATALLASSŌ - καταλλαγή / καταλλάσσω

Pronunciation: kah-tah-lah-GAY / kah-tah-LAHS-soh Strong's: G2643 / G2644 Common Meaning: Reconciliation / Reconcile Key Scripture: Romans 5:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Katallagē means reconciliation; katallassō is the related verb. These words emphasize restored relationship. Romans 5 says enemies are reconciled to God through the death of His Son; 2 Corinthians 5 says God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ. Forgiveness addresses guilt, justification concerns right standing, redemption emphasizes release, and reconciliation emphasizes restored relationship. The ideas overlap but are not identical.

14. HILASTĒRION / HILASMOS - ἱλαστήριον / ἵλασμός

Pronunciation: hee-lahs-TAY-ree-on / hee-lahs-MOSS Strong's: G2435 / G2434 Common Meaning: Atoning Sacrifice / Propitiation / Expiation Key Scripture: Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:5; 1 John 2:2; 4:10

These terms belong to an important and debated area of atonement language. English translations use propitiation, atoning sacrifice, sacrifice of atonement, and related wording. Expiation emphasizes removal or cleansing of sin; propitiation emphasizes dealing with righteous judgment or wrath associated with sin. The biblical evidence should not be reduced to a one-word English contest. Romans 3:25 describes Christ as God's provided means of dealing with sin while demonstrating His righteousness. Hilastērion also appears in Hebrews 9:5 for the mercy seat, linking the term to Old Testament atonement imagery. First John uses hilasmos for Jesus in relation to sins. The central point is clear: God does not ignore sin; in Christ He provides the decisive answer to sin and its Godward consequences. See Study #252.

Memory Anchor

Forgiveness, justification, redemption, reconciliation, and atonement describe complementary dimensions of God's saving work in Christ.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

FAITH AND DISCIPLESHIP

15. PISTIS - πίστις

Pronunciation: PEEs-tees Strong's: G4102 Common Meaning: Faith / Trust / Faithfulness Key Scripture: Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16; Hebrews 11:1

Pistis can communicate faith, trust, belief, faithfulness, or reliability depending on context. It should not automatically be reduced to intellectual agreement. Biblical faith involves trusting God and His promises. Some constructions are debated over whether 'faith in Christ' or 'faithfulness of Christ' is intended. Readers need not resolve every debate to understand the central Gospel message: salvation rests in Christ, not human achievement.

16. PISTEUŌ - πιστεύω

Pronunciation: pees-TYOO-oh Strong's: G4100 Common Meaning: Believe / Trust Key Scripture: John 3:16; Acts 16:31

Pisteuō is the verb related to pistis. In Scripture, believing in Jesus is more than agreeing that facts about Him are true; it can communicate placing trust or confidence in someone. John repeatedly uses pisteuō to call readers to trust Jesus as the Christ and Son of God.

17. MATHĒTĒS - μαθητής

Pronunciation: mah-thay-TAYS Strong's: G3101 Common Meaning: Disciple / Learner Key Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20

A mathētēs is a disciple, student, or learner. Jesus did not merely gather people who agreed with His ideas; He called disciples to follow Him. The Great Commission commands disciple-making through baptism and teaching obedience to Jesus. Christian discipleship is lifelong learning under His authority.

18. AKOLOURTHEŌ - ἀκολουθεῖω

Pronunciation: ah-koh-loo-THEH-oh Strong's: G190 Common Meaning: Follow / Accompany Key Scripture: Mark 1:17; Luke 9:23

Akoloutheō means follow or accompany. Jesus transforms an ordinary word into a discipleship call: 'Follow me.' Luke 9:23 connects following Him with self-denial and taking up one's cross. Grace is free and discipleship is costly; these truths are not enemies. The One who saves also becomes Lord of the disciple's life.

19. MARTYS - μάρτυς

Pronunciation: MAR-toos Strong's: G3144 Common Meaning: Witness Key Scripture: Acts 1:8; Revelation 2:13

Martyr means witness. Acts 1:8 centers on testimony to Jesus. As Christians continued bearing witness even when threatened with death, the word developed a specialized association with those killed for their testimony, producing the English word 'martyr.' That later meaning should not be inserted into every New Testament occurrence. The underlying idea is witness; sometimes faithful witness became costly enough to lead to death.

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

20. AGAPĒ - ἀγάπη

Pronunciation: ah-GAH-pay Strong's: G26 Common Meaning: Love Key Scripture: John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13

Agapē is frequently oversimplified. A popular claim says it always means God's unconditional, self-sacrificing love. That is too rigid. The New Testament uses it magnificently for God's love and Christian love, but the noun itself does not automatically encode 'divine unconditional love.' Context gives the word its specific character. God's love is great because of what Scripture says God does, not because one Greek noun functions as a theological code word.

21. AGAPAO - ἀγαπάω

Pronunciation: ah-gah-PAH-oh Strong's: G25 Common Meaning: Love Key Scripture: John 3:16; Matthew 22:37-39

Agapaō is the verb related to agapē. John 3:16 describes God loving the world and giving His Son. Jesus commands love for God and neighbor. Biblical love is not merely emotion; it expresses itself through loyalty, action, sacrifice, obedience, truth, and care.

22. KOINŌNIA - κοινωνία

Pronunciation: koy-noh-NEE-ah Strong's: G2842 Common Meaning: Fellowship / Participation / Sharing Key Scripture: Acts 2:42; Philippians 2:1

Koinōnia is often translated fellowship, but modern readers may hear that as little more than socializing. The word can communicate sharing, participation, partnership, or communion. Acts 2:42 describes believers devoted to fellowship. Christian fellowship is shared participation in life centered on Christ.

23. EIRĒNĒ - εἰρήνη

Pronunciation: eye-RAY-nay Strong's: G1515 Common Meaning: Peace Key Scripture: Luke 2:14; Romans 5:1

Eirēnē means peace and its New Testament use is deeply connected with the Old Testament vision of shalom. Peace can involve more than absence of conflict. Romans 5:1 speaks of peace with God through Jesus Christ. The Gospel restores the relationship sin has broken. See Study #247 for shalom.

Memory Anchor

Biblical love is defined by Scripture's portrayal of faithful, truthful, self-giving love - not by a Greek dictionary shortcut.

SIN, REPENTANCE, AND FORGIVENESS

24. HAMARTIA - ἁμαρτία

Pronunciation: hah-mar-TEE-ah Strong's: G266 Common Meaning: Sin Key Scripture: Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23

Hamartia is a principal New Testament word for sin. It should not be reduced to the slogan 'sin just means missing the mark.' Like the Hebrew sin vocabulary in Study #252, New Testament usage describes real moral guilt and rebellion against God. Romans 3:23 says all have sinned; Romans 6:23 says sin produces death. The Gospel is good news because humanity's sin problem is real.

25. METANOIA - μετάνοια

Pronunciation: meh-tah-NOY-ah Strong's: G3341 Common Meaning: Repentance Key Scripture: Luke 3:8; Acts 20:21

Metanoia is commonly translated repentance and is sometimes reduced to 'simply changing your mind.' That is incomplete. It involves changed understanding, but New Testament repentance is more than adopting a different opinion. John the Baptist calls for fruit consistent with repentance; Acts connects repentance with turning toward God. The Old Testament repeatedly uses shuv, turn or return. Together the biblical picture is a changed orientation that turns from sin toward God.

26. METANOEOŌ - μετανοέω

Pronunciation: meh-tah-no-EH-oh Strong's: G3340 Common Meaning: Repent / Change One's Mind and Direction Key Scripture: Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38

Metanoēō is the related verb. Jesus begins His public proclamation in Mark with the call, 'Repent and believe in the gospel.' Repentance and faith belong together as responses to good news. Repentance is not payment for grace; it is turning toward the God who gives grace.

27. APHIĒMI - ἀφίημι

Pronunciation: ah-FEE-ay-mee Strong's: G863 Common Meaning: Forgive / Release / Leave / Let Go Key Scripture: Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:9

Aphiēmi has a wider range than 'forgive': leave, send away, release, permit, or forgive depending on context. In forgiveness passages it describes release from guilt or debt. Jesus repeatedly teaches forgiveness because forgiven people are called to become forgiving people. See Study #252 for Old Testament vocabulary of sin, repentance, forgiveness, cleansing, and atonement.

SPIRIT, CHURCH, SERVICE, AND FAMILY

28. PNEUMA - πνεῦμα

Pronunciation: PNYOO-mah Strong's: G4151 Common Meaning: Spirit / Wind / Breath Key Scripture: John 3:5-8; Acts 2:1-4

Pneuma can refer to the Holy Spirit, a human spirit, a spiritual being, wind, or breath. John 3 deliberately contains language that can evoke both wind and Spirit. Readers should not assume every occurrence refers to the Holy Spirit. Context determines the referent. The word corresponds in important ways with Hebrew ruach. See Study #247.

29. HAGIOS - ἅγιος

Pronunciation: HAH-gee-oss Strong's: G40 Common Meaning: Holy / Set Apart Key Scripture: 1 Peter 1:15-16

Hagios means holy. It can describe God, the Holy Spirit, holy things, or God's people. When Christians are called 'saints,' the underlying idea is related to hagios. A saint in New Testament usage is not simply an unusually impressive Christian. Believers are holy ones because they belong to God and are called to live accordingly.

30. EKKLĒSIA - ἐκκλησία

Pronunciation: ek-klay-SEE-ah Strong's: G1577 Common Meaning: Assembly / Congregation / Church Key Scripture: Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Acts 19:32

Ekklēsia is commonly translated church. A popular claim says it literally means 'the called-out ones,' but that relies too heavily on historical components. By New Testament times it was an established word for an assembly or congregation; Acts 19 even uses it for a disorderly civic gathering in Ephesus. The New Testament gives it profound Christian significance by using it for the people gathered by and belonging to Jesus. The Church's identity comes from Christ, not hidden etymology.

31. DIAKONIA - διακονία

Pronunciation: dee-ah-koh-NEE-ah Strong's: G1248 Common Meaning: Service / Ministry Key Scripture: Acts 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:18

Diakonia can describe service or ministry. 'Ministry' can sound like a professional religious career, but the New Testament concept is broader. Christian ministry is service performed for God and others. Second Corinthians 5:18 speaks of a ministry of reconciliation. Different believers serve in different ways, but Christian ministry is never fundamentally about status.

32. DOULOS - δούλος

Pronunciation: DOO-loss Strong's: G1401 Common Meaning: Slave / Servant / Bondservant Key Scripture: Romans 1:1; Philippians 2:7



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

Doulos can mean slave. Some English translations use servant or bondservant in particular contexts. Greco-Roman slavery was complex and should not be casually equated with every feature of later race-based Atlantic slavery, but the force of doulos should not be weakened into a casual volunteer. Paul can call himself a doulos of Christ, and Philipians 2 uses the term for Jesus taking the form of a servant/slave. The word emphasizes belonging, service, humility, and submission to another's authority.

33. HUIOS / HUIOTHESIA - υἱός / υιοθεσία

Pronunciation: hoo-ee-oss / hoo-ee-oh-theh-SEE-ah Strong's: G5207 / G5206 Common Meaning: Son / Adoption as Sons Key Scripture: Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:5

Huios means son; huiothesia is commonly translated adoption or adoption as sons. It reflects recognized family status and inheritance. Romans 8 says believers receive the Spirit of adoption and are heirs with Christ; Galatians 4 says God sent His Son so that those under the law might receive adoption. 'Adoption as sons' should not be read as excluding women. In its ancient inheritance setting, sonship language emphasizes full family status and inheritance shared by all who belong to Christ - male and female.

PART TWO

WANT TO GO DEEPER? INTERMEDIATE

KINGDOM, HUMAN NATURE, LIFE, JUDGMENT, AND HOPE

34. BASILEIA - βασιλεία

Pronunciation: bah-see-LAY-ah Strong's: G932 Common Meaning: Kingdom / Kingship / Royal Rule Key Scripture: Mark 1:15; Matthew 6:33

Basileia can refer to a kingdom, kingship, or royal reign. When Jesus announces that the kingdom of God is at hand, He is not merely announcing territory. God's royal rule is breaking into history through the Messiah. The Kingdom is already present in important ways through Jesus' ministry, yet Christians still await its complete fulfillment - often described as the 'already and not yet.' The central point is simple: God's Kingdom has come through Jesus, and its fullness is still coming.

35. SARX - σάρξ

Pronunciation: SARKS Strong's: G4561 Common Meaning: Flesh Key Scripture: John 1:14; Romans 8:1-13; Galatians 5:16-24

Sarx is often translated flesh and is easily misunderstood if one English gloss is assumed everywhere. It can refer to physical flesh, the human body, human descent, ordinary human existence, weakness, or - especially in some Pauline contexts - humanity operating in rebellion against God. John 1:14 says the Word became flesh, affirming genuine human existence. Paul can contrast life according to the flesh with life according to the Spirit, but he is not teaching that the physical body or matter is inherently evil. Jesus truly became human, rose bodily, and Christians await bodily resurrection. Context determines the sense.

Memory Anchor

Paul's 'flesh' language does not mean the physical body is evil. Sarx must be interpreted in context.

36. ZŌĒ - ζωή

Pronunciation: zoh-AY Strong's: G2222 Common Meaning: Life Key Scripture: John 3:16; John 10:10

Zōē means life. John uses it repeatedly for the life Jesus gives. Eternal life in John is not merely endless existence; it is life found in relationship with God through Christ. John 17:3 connects eternal life with knowing the Father and Jesus Christ whom He sent.

37. AIŌNIOS - αἰώνιος

Pronunciation: eye-OH-nee-oss Strong's: G166 Common Meaning: Eternal / Everlasting Key Scripture: Matthew 25:46; John 3:16

Aiōnios is commonly translated eternal or everlasting and is related to aiōn, a word that can refer to an age or long span. That relationship does not prove aiōnios cannot mean eternal, nor should readers mechanically insert 'age-long' everywhere. Words develop meaning through usage, and context matters. Matthew 25:46 uses the same adjective for punishment and life. Christians differ over some questions of final punishment, but lexical arguments should not predetermine the debate by assigning aiōnios one rigid meaning apart from context.

38. KRISIS - κρίσις

Pronunciation: KREE-sees Strong's: G2920 Common Meaning: Judgment / Decision Key Scripture: John 5:24-29

Krisis can refer to judgment or judicial decision. The New Testament presents God as righteous Judge and teaches that final judgment is real. Jesus is not only Savior; Scripture also identifies Him as the One through whom judgment occurs. This makes the Gospel urgent without requiring fear-based manipulation. The same Jesus who warns about judgment offers life to those who come to Him.

39. ANASTASIS - ἀνάστασις

Pronunciation: ah-NAH-stah-sees Strong's: G386 Common Meaning: Resurrection / Rising Key Scripture: John 11:25; Acts 17:32

Anastasis means resurrection or rising. Christian hope is not ultimately escape from physical existence; it centers on resurrection. Jesus rises from the dead and the New Testament promises resurrection to His people. Jesus says, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' Resurrection is not an optional appendix to Christianity; it stands at the heart of the Gospel.

40. PAROUSIA - παρουσία

Pronunciation: pah-roo-SEE-ah Strong's: G3952 Common Meaning: Presence / Coming / Arrival Key Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Peter 3:4

Parousia can mean presence, arrival, or coming and is frequently used for Jesus' future coming. It should not be treated as a technical code word whose dictionary definition answers every end-times question. Christians disagree about the chronology of some events surrounding Christ's return, but Scripture is clear about the central hope: Jesus will return, and His people are called to remain faithful while waiting.

41. ELPIS - ἐλπίς

Pronunciation: el-PEES Strong's: G1680 Common Meaning: Hope / Expectation Key Scripture: Romans 5:2-5; 1 Peter 1:3

Elpis means hope or expectation. Biblical hope is not merely 'I hope something good happens.' Christian hope rests on what God has promised and already accomplished in Jesus. First Peter connects hope directly to Jesus' resurrection. Because Christ has risen, Christian hope has a historical foundation and a future destination.

Memory Anchor

Christian hope is not wishful thinking. It rests on the risen Jesus and the promises of God.

WHY DOES THE GREEK OLD TESTAMENT MATTER?

The New Testament did not appear in a linguistic vacuum. Several centuries before Jesus, Jewish translators began translating the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. The collection is commonly called the Septuagint (LXX). New Testament authors frequently quote Scripture in Greek forms closely related to it. This matters because Greek biblical vocabulary had already been used to communicate Old Testament ideas: KYRIOS frequently represents YHWH; CHRISTOS corresponds to anointed-one/Messiah language; PNEUMA carries important connections with RUACH; EIRENĒ often communicates ideas associated with SHALOM; HILASTERION carries tabernacle and Day-of-Atonement background through its use for the mercy seat. Greek salvation, righteousness, covenant, sacrifice, and worship vocabulary likewise develops within Old Testament background. The Old and New Testaments belong to one unfolding biblical story.

Memory Anchor

The New Testament's Greek vocabulary often carries an Old Testament story behind it.

HOW CAN GREEK WORD STUDIES GO WRONG?

1. STRONG'S NUMBERS DO NOT DEFINE WORDS

Strong's numbers are an indexing system. They help locate lexical entries; the numbers themselves carry no inspired meaning. Strong's is useful for finding words, not as final authority for interpreting them.

2. A WORD DOES NOT MEAN EVERYTHING IN ITS DICTIONARY ENTRY AT ONCE

A lexicon lists possible meanings. Like English 'bank,' the sentence determines which meaning is intended.

3. WORD ROOTS DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY DETERMINE WORD MEANING

Words develop meanings beyond historical components. Ekklesia should not be defined automatically as 'called-out ones'; study actual usage.

4. AGAPĒ IS NOT A SECRET CATEGORY OF DIVINE LOVE

The common claim that agapē always means divine, unconditional, self-sacrificing love is too simplistic. Scripture's portrayal of God's actions and character creates the theology.

5. METANOIA IS MORE THAN A SLOGAN ABOUT CHANGING YOUR MIND

Biblical repentance must be understood from passages where repentance is preached and described; it involves a changed orientation toward God that produces fruit.

6. PISTIS MUST BE READ IN CONTEXT

Pistis can involve faith, trust, faithfulness, or reliability. Difficult theological questions should not be resolved merely by an English gloss.

7. DOULOS SHOULD NOT BE AUTOMATICALLY SOFTENED

Doulos can genuinely mean slave. Ancient slavery varied across settings; neither sanitize the word nor collapse every historical form of slavery into one identical institution.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

8. SARX DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY MEAN SINFUL BODY

Sarx can refer to physical flesh or embodied existence and, in some Pauline contexts, human life oriented away from God. Incarnation and bodily resurrection show the body itself is not evil.

9. AÎŌNIOS SHOULD NOT BE DEFINED BY ETYMOLOGY ALONE

Its relationship to aîōn does not force one fixed meaning into every occurrence. Actual usage and context determine meaning.

10. LOGOS SHOULD NOT BE REDUCED TO GREEK PHILOSOPHY

Stoic and Philonic uses may illuminate the environment, but John 1 defines the Logos through creation, incarnation, revelation, and relationship with the Father.

11. GREEK LETTERS ARE NOT SECRET THEOLOGICAL CODES

The New Testament communicates through vocabulary, grammar, syntax, literary and historical context, and the biblical storyline - not hidden-letter decoding.

12. WORD STUDIES DO NOT REPLACE PASSAGE STUDY

A safer order is: PASSAGE -> WORD -> GRAMMAR -> OTHER OCCURRENCES -> OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND -> BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS.

Bible-Study Safeguard

The question is not, 'What interesting meanings can be placed inside this Greek word?' The better question is, 'What is the biblical author communicating with this word in this passage?'

HOW CAN GREEK GRAMMAR CHANGE MEANING?

Greek communicates meaning through more than vocabulary. A beginner does not need to master Greek grammar to understand Scripture faithfully, but knowing grammar exists can prevent careless word studies.

CASE

Greek nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and articles change form partly according to sentence function. Case can indicate relationships such as subject, possession, indirect relationship, or direct object.

TENSE AND ASPECT

Greek verbs communicate time and the way an action is presented. Aspect concerns how the writer portrays action - for example as ongoing, complete, or viewed as a whole. Popular teaching sometimes assigns overly rigid theological meanings to tenses; grammar must be interpreted in context.

VOICE

Greek verbs may present the subject as acting, being acted upon, or participating in an action in other ways.

MOOD

Mood helps show whether an action is asserted, commanded, desired, or presented as possible or conditional.

PARTICIPLES

Greek frequently uses participles. Their relationship to the main verb can affect interpretation.

THE ARTICLE

Greek uses an article often translated 'the,' but its usage does not correspond perfectly to English. Presence or absence of the article should not become an automatic theological rule.

Memory Anchor

The dictionary tells what a word can mean. Grammar and context help determine what it is doing in the sentence.

A GOSPEL PATH THROUGH THESE WORDS

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

THEOS / LOGOS

God has spoken and made Himself known supremely in the Word who became flesh.

↓

SIN

HAMARTIA

Humanity has sinned against God.

↓

REPENTANCE

METANOIA / METANOËO

God calls sinners to turn toward Him.

↓

FAITH

PISTIS / PISTEUÔ

The Gospel calls sinners to trust Jesus.

↓

GRACE

CHARIS

Salvation is God's undeserved gift.

↓

ATONEMENT

HILASTERION / HILASMOS

God deals decisively with sin through Christ.

↓

JUSTIFICATION

DIKAIÖO / DIKAIOSYNË

God provides right standing through Christ.

↓

REDEMPTION

APOLYTRÖSIS

Christ brings release and redemption.

↓

RECONCILIATION

KATALLAGË / KATALLASSÖ

Enemies are restored to relationship with God.

↓

SALVATION

SÖZÖ / SÖTËRIA

God rescues sinners.

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This sequence is a teaching aid, not a rigid formula for salvation or a claim that every word represents a separate chronological stage. Together, the words help readers follow the New Testament Gospel message.

THE GOSPEL CONNECTION

These Greek words belong to one story. THEOS - God. He makes Himself known through the LOGOS, the Word who becomes flesh. Humanity rebels: HAMARTIA, sin. But God announces EUANGELION, good news, and sends IËSOUS, Jesus, the CHRISTOS, Messiah and KYRIOS, Lord. Jesus truly becomes human - SARX. He lives faithfully, dies for sins, and rises - ANASTASIS. At the cross God deals decisively with sin - HILASTERION / HILASMOS. God offers SÖTËRIA, salvation, because of CHARIS, grace. The Gospel calls sinners to METANOIA, repentance, and PISTEUÔ, belief/trust. Those in Christ are DIKAIÖO, justified; receive APOLYTRÖSIS, redemption; KATALLAGË, reconciliation; ZÖË, life; EIRËNË, peace; and HUIOTHESIA, adoption. The PNEUMA, Holy Spirit, dwells and transforms them. They become EKKLËSIA, Christ's Church; share KOINÖNIA; learn AGAPË; serve in DIAKONIA; AKOLOUTHEÖ, follow Jesus; and bear MARTYS, witness. They live under His BASILEIA, Kingdom, and wait with ELPIS, hope, for His PAROUSIA, return. The story ends not with death but resurrection, judgment, inheritance, restoration, and new creation. At the center stands Jesus Christ.

Memory Anchor

Greek vocabulary becomes most valuable when it helps readers see the New Testament's one Gospel story centered on Jesus.

QUICK-REFERENCE INDEX



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

AGAPAO - G25 - Love
AGAPE - G26 - Love
AIÖNIOS - G166 - Eternal / Everlasting
AKOLOURTHEO - G190 - Follow
ANASTASIS - G386 - Resurrection
APHIEMI - G863 - Forgive / Release
APOLYTRÖSIS - G629 - Redemption / Release
BASILEIA - G932 - Kingdom / Royal Rule
CHARIS - G5485 - Grace / Favor
CHRISTOS - G5547 - Christ / Messiah
DIAKONIA - G1248 - Service / Ministry
DIKAIÖO - G1344 - Justify / Vindicate
DIKAIOSYNÉ - G1343 - Righteousness / Justice
DOULOS - G1401 - Slave / Servant
EIRÉNÉ - G1515 - Peace
EKKLÉSIA - G1577 - Assembly / Church
ELPIS - G1680 - Hope
EUANGELION - G2098 - Gospel / Good News
HAGIOS - G40 - Holy
HAMARTIA - G266 - Sin
HILASMOS - G2434 - Atoning Sacrifice / Propitiation / Expiation
HILASTÉRION - G2435 - Atoning Means / Mercy Seat / Propitiation

HUIOS - G5207 - Son
HUIOTHESIA - G5206 - Adoption as Sons
IESOUS - G2424 - Jesus
KATALLAGÉ - G2643 - Reconciliation
KATALLASSO - G2644 - Reconcile
KOINÖNIA - G2842 - Fellowship / Participation
KRISIS - G2920 - Judgment
KYRIOS - G2962 - Lord / Master
LOGOS - G3056 - Word / Message / Account
MARTYS - G3144 - Witness
MATHÉTÉS - G3101 - Disciple
METANOEO - G3340 - Repent
METANOIA - G3341 - Repentance
PAROUSIA - G3952 - Presence / Coming
PISTEÜO - G4100 - Believe / Trust
PISTIS - G4102 - Faith / Trust / Faithfulness
PNEUMA - G4151 - Spirit / Wind / Breath
SARX - G4561 - Flesh
SÖTÉRIA - G4991 - Salvation
SÖZO - G4982 - Save / Rescue
THEOS - G2316 - God
ZÖÉ - G2222 - Life

HEBREW-GREEK CONNECTIONS

MASHIACH -> CHRISTOS

Hebrew: Anointed One. Greek: Christ / Anointed One. Jesus is the Messiah.

YHWH / ADONAI -> KYRIOS

The Greek Old Testament frequently uses kyrios where the Hebrew text contains YHWH or lordship language. New Testament applications of such passages to Jesus can carry major Christological significance.

RUACH -> PNEUMA

Both can communicate Spirit / wind / breath and both require context.

SHALOM -> EIRÉNÉ

New Testament peace should be read within the larger biblical story of reconciliation and restoration.

CHATA / CHATAAH AND OTHER SIN WORDS -> HAMARTIA

The Hebrew Old Testament uses several sin words; the Greek New Testament frequently uses hamartia. Neither should be reduced to "missing the mark."

SHUV -> METANOIA / METANOEO

The words are not lexical equivalents in every respect, but together they illuminate the biblical picture of turning from sin toward God.

KAPHAR / ATONEMENT THEMES -> HILASTÉRION / HILASMOS

The Hebrew sacrificial system develops atonement, cleansing, sacrifice, and reconciliation themes. The New Testament terms participate in that larger biblical world; trace relationships through passages and the Septuagint rather than assuming one-word equivalence.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

REVIEW AND RETENTION

1. What language was the New Testament primarily written in? Koine Greek.
2. What does a Strong's number do? It identifies a lexical entry so readers can locate the word in concordances and study tools.
3. Does a Strong's number define a verse? No. Context and grammar determine how the word functions.
4. What does logos mean? Word, message, statement, or account depending on context; John 1 identifies the Logos as the eternal Word who became flesh.
5. What does euangelion mean? Gospel or good news.
6. What does Christos mean? Christ, Messiah, or Anointed One.
7. Why is kyrios especially important? It means Lord or master and is frequently used in the Greek Old Testament where Hebrew contains YHWH.
8. What does charis mean? Grace, favor, or gift depending on context.
9. What does pistis mean? Faith, trust, faithfulness, or reliability depending on context.
10. Does agapē automatically mean God's unconditional love? No. Context determines its meaning and character.
11. What does metanoia mean? Repentance; biblically it involves more than merely changing an opinion.
12. What does hamartia mean? Sin.
13. What does aphīēmi mean? Forgive, release, leave, or let go depending on context.
14. What do hilastērion and hilasmos contribute? They describe Christ in relation to God's decisive dealing with sin and are translated with terms such as atoning sacrifice, propitiation, or expiation.
15. What does reconciliation vocabulary emphasize? Restored relationship between God and sinners through Christ.
16. What does pneuma mean? Spirit, wind, or breath depending on context.
17. Does every pneuma refer to the Holy Spirit? No.
18. Does ekklēsia literally mean called-out ones in every occurrence? No. Its established usage means assembly or congregation and, in Christian contexts, the Church.
19. What does doulos mean? Slave, servant, or bondservant depending on translation and context.
20. What does sarx mean? Flesh; its sense ranges from physical flesh or human existence to humanity oriented away from God in some Pauline contexts.
21. Does Paul teach the physical body is inherently evil? No. Incarnation and bodily resurrection contradict that idea.
22. What does huiōthesia mean? Adoption or adoption as sons - the granting of family status and inheritance.
23. Does adoption-as-sons language exclude women? No. In its inheritance setting it emphasizes full status and inheritance shared by all believers in Christ.
24. What does martys mean? Witness. The specialized English meaning martyr developed from faithful witness unto death.
25. What does basileia mean? Kingdom, kingship, or royal rule.
26. What does anastasis mean? Resurrection.
27. What does parousia mean? Presence, arrival, or coming; frequently Christ's future return.
28. What does elpis mean? Hope or expectation.
29. Why does the Septuagint matter? The New Testament authors inherited and used Greek biblical vocabulary already shaped by the Greek Old Testament.
30. Why can etymology mislead? Historical parts or origins do not automatically determine meaning in a passage.
31. Why does Greek grammar matter? Case, tense/aspect, voice, mood, participles, article usage, and syntax can affect how words function.
32. Must a reader master Greek to understand the New Testament faithfully? No. Reliable translations communicate Scripture faithfully; Greek can help examine details more carefully.
33. What is the goal of learning Greek vocabulary? To read Scripture more carefully, understand the biblical storyline more clearly, and know Jesus more deeply.

FINAL MEMORY ANCHORS

- Greek is a tool for understanding Scripture more carefully - not a shortcut around Scripture.
- Strong's numbers identify words. They do not define verses.
- A dictionary gives possible meanings. Context determines the meaning intended in a passage.
- Grammar matters.
- Word roots do not automatically determine word meaning.
- Greek letters are not secret theological codes.
- Logos should be understood from John's Gospel, not reduced to Greek philosophy.
- Agapē does not automatically mean 'God's unconditional love.'
- Pistis can communicate faith, trust, or faithfulness depending on context.
- Metanoia should not be reduced to 'just change your mind.'
- Hamartia should not be reduced to missing the mark.
- Pneuma can mean Spirit, spirit, wind, or breath.
- Ekklēsia means assembly or congregation; 'called-out ones' is not a reliable automatic definition.
- Doulos can genuinely mean slave.
- Sarx does not mean the physical body is inherently evil.
- Huiōthesia emphasizes family status and inheritance in Christ.
- Martys means witness; martyr developed from faithful witness unto death.
- Aionios must be interpreted through usage and context rather than etymology alone.
- Christos means Messiah or Anointed One.
- Kyrios can carry significant Old Testament divine-name background.
- Hilastērion and hilasmos belong to the New Testament's rich atonement vocabulary.
- Katallagē emphasizes reconciliation with God.
- Anastasis means resurrection.
- Parousia points to Christ's coming or presence.
- Elpis is Christian hope grounded in God's promises.
- The New Testament's Greek vocabulary often carries an Old Testament story behind it.
- The dictionary tells what a word can mean. Grammar and context help determine what it is doing in the sentence.
- The purpose of Greek study is not discovering secret meanings. It is understanding Scripture more carefully.

SCRIPTURE READING PATH

Matthew 1:18-25 - Jesus and His saving mission
Matthew 5-7 - Kingdom, righteousness, discipleship, and obedience
Matthew 16:13-20 - Jesus the Christ
Matthew 22:34-40 - Love for God and neighbor
Matthew 25:31-46 - Judgment and eternal destinies
Matthew 28:16-20 - Making disciples
Mark 1:14-20 - Gospel, repentance, faith, and following Jesus
Luke 2:25-32 - Salvation in Jesus
Luke 15 - Repentance, restoration, and joy
John 1:1-18 - God, the Word, incarnation, grace, and truth
John 3:1-21 - Spirit, faith, salvation, and eternal life
John 10:1-18 - Jesus gives life
John 11:17-27 - Resurrection and life
John 20:24-31 - Believing Jesus is the Christ
Acts 1:1-11 - Witness and Christ's return
Acts 2:1-47 - Spirit, repentance, baptism, Church, and fellowship
Acts 4:8-12 - Salvation in Jesus
Acts 17:16-34 - Resurrection proclaimed in Athens
Acts 19:21-41 - Ekklēsia used for a civic assembly
Romans 1:16-17 - Gospel, salvation, faith, and righteousness
Romans 3:21-28 - Grace, redemption, atonement, faith, and justification

Romans 5:1-11 - Justification, peace, hope, and reconciliation
Romans 6 - Sin, grace, and new life
Romans 8 - Spirit, flesh, adoption, hope, and glory
Romans 10:8-13 - Faith, confession, salvation, and the Lord
1 Corinthians 13 - Love
1 Corinthians 15 - Gospel and resurrection
2 Corinthians 5:14-21 - New creation and reconciliation
Galatians 2:15-21 - Faith and justification
Galatians 4:1-7 - Adoption and inheritance
Galatians 5:13-26 - Flesh, love, freedom, and life by the Spirit
Ephesians 1:3-14 - Grace, redemption, adoption, inheritance, and the Spirit
Ephesians 2:1-10 - Grace, faith, salvation, and good works
Philippians 2:5-11 - Christ, servant, Lord, and exaltation
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - Resurrection and Christ's coming
Hebrews 9 - Mercy seat, sacrifice, and atonement
Hebrews 11 - Faith
1 Peter 1:3-25 - Hope, holiness, faith, and resurrection
1 John 2:1-2 - Christ and atoning sacrifice
1 John 4:7-21 - God's love, atonement, and Christian love
Revelation 2:12-17 - Faithful witness
Revelation 21:22 - New creation, life, and the fulfillment of Christian hope

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

Helpful resources include a Bible with cross-references and translation notes; a concordance linked to Strong's numbers; a reliable Greek-English lexicon; an interlinear New Testament used alongside a normal English translation; STEP Bible; Blue Letter Bible; BibleProject resources for biblical themes and word studies; and, for deeper study, technical Greek lexicons, grammars, textual resources, and reputable New Testament commentaries. Readers interested in Old Testament connections may compare the Septuagint with the Hebrew Old Testament while remembering that translation relationships are not always one-to-one. Related 3Nails studies: #247 - 100 Important Hebrew Words for Deeper Study; #248 - Names of God in Hebrew; #249 - Hebrew Words That Reveal God's Character; #252 - Hebrew Words for Sin, Repentance, and Forgiveness.

Resource Safeguard

Listing a resource does not mean 3Nails endorses every theological position, methodology, statistic, strategy, publication, or conclusion it produces. Compare resources, examine words in their passages, pay attention to grammar and context, and continually return to Scripture.

FINAL THOUGHT

Learning Greek can feel intimidating, but a reader does not need to become a Greek scholar to benefit from important words. Logos slows readers down in John 1. Euangelion highlights good news. Charis reveals grace. Pistis and pisteuō illuminate faith and trust. Metanoia clarifies repentance. Hamartia takes sin seriously. Aphīēmi reveals forgiveness. Hilastērion and hilasmos deepen atonement. Katallagē shows reconciliation. Pneuma points to Spirit while requiring context. Sarx prevents simplistic ideas about flesh. Huiōthesia shows belonging and inheritance. Ekklēsia identifies Christ's gathered people. Martys explains witness. Basileia announces God's Kingdom. Anastasis centers resurrection. Parousia points toward Jesus' return. Elpis expresses hope.



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

But the words themselves are not the destination. They point back to Scripture, and Scripture points to Jesus. God has spoken - LOGOS. The Word became flesh - SARX. Humanity has a real problem - HAMARTIA. But God announces good news - EUANGELION. Jesus is the Messiah - CHRISTOS - and Lord - KYRIOS. He dies for sins; God provides atonement - HILASTĒRION / HILASMOS. He rises - ANASTASIS. God offers salvation - SŌTĒRIA - by grace - CHARIS. Sinners repent - METANOIA - and believe - PISTEUŌ. Those in Christ are justified - DIKAIŌŌ; redeemed - APOLYTRŌSIS; reconciled - KATALLAGĒ; adopted - HUIOTHESIA; and given life - ZŌĒ. They become His Church - EKKLĒSIA, learn AGAPĒ, follow - AKOLOURTHEŌ, bear MARTYS witness, live under His BASILEIA, await His PAROUSIA, and wait with ELPIS.

One day faith will become sight. The risen King will return. Death will not have the final word. God will dwell with His people and creation will be made new. Careful Greek study should lead not toward secret knowledge, pride, dependence on dictionaries, or confidence in clever word studies, but back to the text of Scripture, back to the Gospel, and back to Jesus.

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus.