

A Guide to Key Biblical Terms



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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been engaged in a spiritual conversation with someone only to find you're talking past one another?

On the surface, it may even sound like you agree. Yet, the more you speak, it becomes apparent they are approaching biblical concepts from a very different perspective.

One of the most significant reasons this happens is because people are operating with different definitions of the same terms. To aid in your discussions, we have prepared *A Guide to Key Biblical Terms*.

We pray it not only guides your conversations but is also a blessing to help you appreciate God's amazing love for you in Jesus.

Atonement

The concept of atonement is rooted in the Old Testament Day of Atonement. Endless sacrifices made by the priests were a constant reminder of sin. The Ten Commandments, contained in the ark of the covenant, were a visible reminder of just how far we have fallen. So, once a year (on the Day of Atonement), the high priest would sprinkle blood on the atonement cover, effectively covering our record of not keeping the commandments from God's view (Leviticus 16).

This picture of blood was dramatic. An animal gave up its life to preserve yours. These recurring sacrifices demonstrated the need for a sacrifice to come that could cover our sin and appease God's wrath.

Jesus came as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He is God's sacrifice of atonement. (Romans 3:25). His blood covers all sin (1 John 1:7). On the cross, Jesus, as our substitute, faced God's wrath for sin and took the punishment we deserved.

God has reconciled the world to himself in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19). Jesus' atonement, paid once for all (Hebrews 9:12), doesn't make deliverance from sin possible; it makes it complete. This gift, received through faith (John 3:16), means you are now "at one" with God.

STUDY ATONEMENT IN THE SCRIPTURES

Leviticus 16

John 1:29

Romans 3:25

1 John 1:7

2 Corinthians 5:19

Hebrews 9:12

John 3:16

Baptism

The Bible contains commands to be baptized (Acts 2:38). For this reason, it's easy to understand why many see baptism as something we must do. Unfortunately, this emphasis can lead to missing out on the beauty of this gift.

This washing is a miraculous work of God. “He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). We are merely passive participants (Romans 6:3–4). Being baptized is no more a ‘work’ than reading the Bible. The Spirit actively works faith through both.

A promise is made at baptism—but not by us. In baptism, God forgives your sins (Acts 2:38), adopts you as his child, and covers you with Christ (Galatians 3:26–27). God makes us “heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7).

While a person is not condemned for not being baptized (Mark 16:16), this tremendous gift provides personal relief and confidence. In baptism, God says, “I love you, I forgive you, and I have made you my own.” No wonder God wants us to be baptized and to share this gift with others!

STUDY BAPTISM IN THE SCRIPTURES

Acts 2:38

Titus 3:5

Romans 6:3–4

Acts 2:38

Galatians 3:26–27

Titus 3:7

March 16:16

Covenant

A covenant is an agreement between two parties. God made a bilateral covenant with his Old Testament people at Mount Sinai. God promised Israel would be his treasured possession if they obeyed his commandments (Exodus 19–24). It was a conditional, bilateral covenant. Unfortunately, Israel could not keep their side of this agreement.

So, God promised a new covenant: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, That I will make a new covenant....They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:31,33–34). There are no ifs in this covenant because it is a unilateral agreement, dependent on God alone. Jesus is the way God accomplished this new covenant.

Jesus fulfilled the old covenant by obeying the commandments perfectly as our substitute and giving us credit. As a result, this first covenant was made obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). In its place, Jesus instituted the new covenant “in his blood” (Luke 22:20) through which we have forgiveness (Colossians 1:14). Since this covenant’s promises depend entirely on Jesus, we can now approach God with confidence.

STUDY COVENANTS IN THE SCRIPTURES

Exodus 19-24

Jeremiah 31:31, 33-34

Hebrews 8:13

Luke 22:20

Colossians 1:14

Cross

Some consider the cross, an instrument of execution, as offensive. So, why has it served historically as an essential symbol of the Christian Church?

Jesus' death at Calvary is where he made the entire payment for sin and willingly gave up his life to save ours. This was a moment of glory (John 12:23–33). From the cross, he said, “It is finished” (John 19:30), which literally means “paid in full.” When Jesus died, the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51), demonstrating we now have direct access to God.

While a crucifix (a cross with Jesus' body) emphasizes Christ's suffering and death, an empty cross reminds us death could not hold him. Jesus rose from the dead. The cross proclaims Jesus' payment is sufficient and his work complete.

Sadly, some do not understand the cross. “The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). Since Christians see the cross as a symbol of victory and hope, they display it prominently.

STUDY THE CROSS IN THE SCRIPTURES

John 12:23–33
John 19:30

Matthew 27:51
1 Corinthians 1:18

Endure to the End

An encouragement sometimes spoken is to “endure to the end.” This concept comes from Jesus’ teaching about end times when he says, “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13). Unfortunately, what might be intended for encouragement can easily become a burden. People come up with a list of all the things they must continue to do.

Jesus warned of many who would fall away from Christ. He spoke of persecution and false prophets. There will be an increase of wickedness, and the love of most would grow cold. This is why he talks about those who endure to the end.

The context speaks of those who nurture the oil of faith (Matthew 25:1–13), and recognize the faithful love shown to them (Matthew 25:14–30). The encouragement is not for us to do more, but rather to endure by trusting in Jesus’ works for us (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Rather than being a burden, this focus makes enduring to the end truly encouraging.

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

MATTHEW 24:13

STUDY ENDURE TO THE END IN THE SCRIPTURES

Matthew 24:13

Matthew 25:1-30

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Eternal Life

Eternal life is intimately connected to life with God. Jesus said, “I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). This is not something we attain by obedience, but instead is a gift of God (Romans 6:23).

When you receive new birth through faith (John 3:3), you have this new life. “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12). The Bible speaks of eternal life as a present reality. “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47).

The new life believers enjoy through a restored relationship with God is just a foretaste of what awaits us (2 Corinthians 5:5). For this reason, Christians often equate eternal life with heaven, when we shall live eternally with God. Any life outside of God’s presence could only be described biblically as hell.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROMANS 6:23

STUDY ETERNAL LIFE IN THE SCRIPTURES

John 10:10

Romans 6:23

John 3:3

1 John 5:12

John 6:47

2 Corinthians 5:5

Faith

Faith is belief or trust in something. Just as a foundation is important to a building, faith is only as good as what it places its hope in.

We will lack certainty if our trust relies, even in part, on ourselves or our efforts (Galatians 5:4). **See Works.**

This certainty is why God encourages us to trust in Christ's saving work alone for eternal life. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Even this faith is not a work of humans but a gift (Ephesians 2:8) and work (1 Corinthians 12:3) of God.

Through faith in Christ alone, the merits of Christ's saving work become ours personally. Moreover, this faith provides complete certainty and confidence (Hebrews 11:1).

**Christ is become of no effect unto you,
whosoever of you are justified by the law;
ye are fallen from grace.**

GALATIANS 5:4

STUDY FAITH IN THE SCRIPTURES

Galatians 5:4

John 3:16

Ephesians 2:8

1 Corinthians 12:3

Hebrews 11:1

Forgiveness

While God does call us to forgive others, the Bible primarily emphasizes God's forgiveness. This forgiveness is inseparably connected to atonement. God does not overlook sin. Christ's substitutionary sacrifice has covered it. This substitution results in God removing any charge against us (2 Corinthians 5:19), i.e., forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not dependent on our actions. The Bible teaches forgiveness is a present reality because it was already won by Christ: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7). Nothing more can be added because his payment was complete (Hebrews 10:18).

This payment was made for all sin (1 John 1:7) of all people (1 John 2:2). It is personally received through faith.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

EPHESIANS 1:7

STUDY FORGIVENESS IN THE SCRIPTURES

2 Corinthians 5:19
Ephesians 1:7
Hebrews 10:18

1 John 1:7
1 John 2:2

God

The Bible reveals there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4), yet he reveals himself as three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Spirit (Matthew 28:19). The Christian Church uses the term “triune” (three in one) to describe this mystery.

God is not merely different in degree from us. He is unique and in a class of his own. He is completely different in his very essence. “I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22). He is not an exalted human. God is spirit (John 4:24).

God is eternal (Psalm 90:2). There is never a time he did not exist as God. God is present everywhere (Jeremiah 23:24). God has all power (Genesis 17:1). He knows all (Psalm 139:1–4).

At first, all of those attributes might be frightening, but the fact God is so much higher than us (Isaiah 55:9) brings comfort, knowing his power to save is also far more significant than ours. A human-sized god would seem distant and could never provide the complete rescue this world needed.

Perhaps most comforting of all is God’s amazing and eternal love (Jeremiah 31:3). His nature as three persons in one God demonstrates the relational nature of God and his love in action from all eternity. “God is love” (1 John 4:8). He will never tire of loving you!

STUDY GOD’S NATURE IN THE SCRIPTURES

Deuteronomy 6:4

Matthew 28:19

Isaiah 45:22

John 4:24

Psalm 90:2

Jeremiah 23:24

Genesis 17:1

Psalm 139:1-4

Isaiah 55:9

Jeremiah 31:3

1 John 4:8

Good Works

See Works.

Gospel

The word gospel literally means “good news.” This “good news” is the message that God has fulfilled his promised rescue mission in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1–9). It demonstrates God’s amazing love.

The gospel is not a plan or list of activities we must do. It is the message that the work is done (John 19:30). As our substitute, Jesus’ perfect life, innocent death, and glorious resurrection have transformed the way God now sees us. “For in [the gospel] is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17).

The gospel message is the way God assures believers they are saved (Romans 1:16).

STUDY THE GOSPEL IN THE SCRIPTURES

1 Corinthians 15:1–9
John 19:30

Romans 1:17
Romans 1:16

Grace

Grace is God's, no-strings-attached love (Romans 3:24). It is unconditional (Ephesians 2:8–9), undeserved (Titus 3:5), and unlimited (Romans 5:20). It comes at no cost to us but at great sacrifice to the giver. Grace (Ephesians 2:8), gift (Romans 6:23), and joy (Luke 2:10) all share the same Greek root word. Knowing that grace is a gift brings about true joy.

Grace is not an enabling power to help us do things to gain God's favor. Instead, grace is God's favor already won for us by Jesus' saving work. Combining grace with works is an insult to the giver and results in losing grace (Galatians 5:4). "If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Romans 11:6). Grace motivates Christians to do good works because they are now confident of salvation.

**For by grace are ye saved through faith;
and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of
God: Not of works, lest any man should
boast.**

EPHESIANS 2:8-9

STUDY GRACE IN THE SCRIPTURES

Romans 3:24

Ephesians 2:8-9

Titus 3:5

Romans 5:20

Ephesians 2:8

Romans 6:23

Luke 2:10

Galatians 5:4

Romans 11:6

Heaven

While heaven is sometimes described as a destination, it is more often referred to as the dwelling of God with his people forever (Revelation 7:9–17). It will have “no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain” (Revelation 21:4).

The word heaven in the Bible can be used to describe the sky with clouds (Job 36:28), the universe with stars (Genesis 1:14–19), and the unseen Heavenly City (2 Corinthians 12:2). 1 Corinthians 15:40–41 describes the glory of the resurrection of the body, not different kingdoms or levels of heaven.

Neither is there an intermediate place before heaven. The Paradise, Jesus promised the thief on the cross “today” was heaven with God (Luke 23:43, Revelation 2:7). Paul describes departing and immediately being with Christ (Philippians 1:21).

What makes heaven so glorious is not anything we have achieved but rather the saving work of Jesus (Revelation 21:22–23). Through faith in his saving work, all believers have the sure hope of living eternally with God in heaven (1 Peter 1:3–5).

STUDY HEAVEN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Revelation 7:9–17
Revelation 21:4
Genesis 1:14–19
2 Corinthians 12:2

1 Corinthians 15:40–41
Luke 23:43
Revelation 2:7
Philippians 1:21

Revelation 21:22–23
1 Peter 1:3–5

Hell

Death means separation. Spiritual death, separation of the soul from God, is a condition we are born into (Ephesians 2:1). Temporal death is the separation of body and soul (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Eternal death is separation from the presence of God forever. This last death, experienced in hell, is what everyone deserves because of sin (Romans 6:23).

Many reject the saving work of Jesus and choose instead to stand before God on their own imperfect records. Since a holy God is repulsed by sin, his perfect justice sends the sinner out of his presence forever. Tragically, this will be the eternal fate of many, for “wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction” (Matthew 7:13).

God does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9) but wants all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). This is why he commands his people to share the gospel with all (Mark 16:15).

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

1 TIMOTHY 2:4

STUDY SEPARATION FROM GOD IN THE SCRIPTURES

Ephesians 2:1
Ecclesiastes 12:7
Romans 6:23

Matthew 7:13
2 Peter 3:9
1 Timothy 2:4

Mark 16:15

Holiness

Holiness means “set apart” from all that is sinful and imperfect. This description of character is not merely the absence of any evil but also includes the fullness of all good. Since God is holy, anyone who wants to dwell in his presence must also be holy (Matthew 5:48). God uses himself as the standard for this moral perfection.

Since angels are in perfect conformity with God’s will, they can dwell in his presence and be called holy (Luke 9:26). Sinful people can only be regarded as holy through Jesus’ holiness.

See also Righteousness.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

MATTHEW 5:48

STUDY HOLINESS IN THE SCRIPTURES

Matthew 5:48

Luke 9:26

Jesus

Jesus is God from all eternity (John 1:1–2). He took on human flesh (John 1:14) and became man, born of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:31). As man, he was able to serve as our substitute by living perfectly under the law (Galatians 4:4) and dying for us (Galatians 3:13). As God, this ransom could pay the price for all the world (Mark 10:45).

See also Redemption and Savior.

God sent Jesus as the mediator to bring us into God's presence (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the final prophet (Hebrews 1:1–2) and has revealed all we need in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:15–17). The Aaronic priesthood was replaced by the Melchizedek priesthood (Hebrews 7:11–19) of which Jesus is the final and only high priest (Hebrews 7:23–27) who made the full and ultimate sacrifice for the world (1 John 2:2). Jesus also serves as our final king ruling over all things for the church (Ephesians 1:22–23). Through Jesus, every believer has direct access to God.

As our perfect substitute, our faith rests solely on Christ's saving work (Hebrews 12:2).

STUDY JESUS IN THE SCRIPTURES

John 1:1–2

John 1:14

Luke 1:31

Galatians 4:4

Galatians 3:13

Mark 10:45

1 Timothy 2:5

Hebrews 1:1–2

2 Timothy 3:15–17

Hebrews 7:11–19

1 John 2:2

Ephesians 1:22–23

Hebrews 12:2

Justification

Justification is a legal term. It describes God's act of declaring sinners not guilty because of Christ's righteousness. This was guaranteed by Christ's resurrection: "[Jesus] was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

Asking God to judge us based on our own imperfect record would be a terrifying prospect. Relying on our record—even in part—could never yield a not guilty verdict (Galatians 2:16).

Yet, through faith, believers stand on Christ's perfect record and are personally assured of this acquittal. Through faith in Christ's saving work, his merits are credited to us (2 Corinthians 5:21), and we are reckoned righteous. **See also Righteousness.**

Believers enjoy a new status before God as "the righteous" and "saints." They already know the verdict and can look forward to Judgment Day. This brings peace with God (Romans 5:1).

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

STUDY JUSTIFICATION IN THE SCRIPTURES

Romans 4:25
Galatians 2:16

2 Corinthians 5:21
Romans 5:1

Law

God's Law, summarized in the Ten Commandments, reflects God's perfect expectations for us. Any infraction is a serious offense to God punishable by eternal death. **See Hell.**

Many view the law as a way to gain God's favor. However, earning favor by good behavior is impossible because we would have to keep his commandments perfectly. Instead, God gave his law as a mirror to show us our sins (Romans 3:20).

A common misconception is that the law mentioned in the New Testament is a reference to Old Testament laws, which no longer apply. However, a closer study of the context reveals references to the moral law (summarized by the Ten Commandments), which still apply today (compare. Romans 7:1—8:4).

When we fully recognize our sin and the punishment we deserve, we put our trust solely in Jesus—the only one who kept the commandments perfectly (Romans 10:4).

STUDY THE LAW IN THE SCRIPTURES

Exodus 20
Romans 3:20

Romans 7:1-8:4
Romans 10:4

Redemption

Redemption is “paying a ransom” and “buying back from slavery.” God’s miraculous rescue of Israel from Egypt was often described as redemption. More often, redemption refers to Jesus’ saving work for the world.

Christ willingly paid the ransom price (Matthew 20:28) for sin through his blood (Ephesians 1:7) and death. He rescued us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13), which brings freedom from sin (John 8:34,36), eternal death (2 Timothy 1:10), and the power of the devil (Hebrews 2:14). This rescue now frees God’s people to live for him (2 Corinthians 5:15).

See also Salvation.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

GALATIANS 3:13

STUDY REDEMPTION IN THE SCRIPTURES

Matthew 20:28
Ephesians 1:7
Galatians 3:13
John 8:34,36

2 Timothy 1:10
Hebrews 2:14
2 Corinthians 5:15

Repentance

Repentance is a new mindset. This involves both sorrow over sin (2 Corinthians 7:10) and trust in God's forgiveness (Psalm 51:12).

Repentance is a change of mind from trust in our failed works to trust in Christ's saving works. Since repentance is motivated by grace (Romans 2:4), it is inseparably connected to faith.

Repentance is not a series of actions we must do to merit God's forgiveness or favor. It is not a work of man. Instead, repentance, like faith, is a gift of God (Acts 5:31). Commands to repent, like commands to believe, are empowered and worked by God (Acts 11:18).

This new heart now delights in a life of thanks and praise to God, motivated (2 Corinthians 5:14,15) and empowered (Galatians 2:20) by Christ.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

ACTS 5:31

STUDY REPENTANCE IN THE SCRIPTURES

2 Corinthians 7:10
Psalm 51:12
Romans 2:4
Acts 5:31

Acts 11:18
2 Corinthians 5:14,15
Galatians 2:20

Righteousness

Righteousness is right standing with God. It requires perfect obedience to God's commands. It is often used synonymously with holiness since holy character results in a righteous position (Acts 3:14). **See Holiness.**

Since no one can perfectly keep the commandments, it is impossible to be made righteous by the law (Romans 3:10,20). Only Jesus can be called "righteous" (1 John 2:1) because he lived perfectly for us under the law (Galatians 4:4). He gives us his perfect record (2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 5:17) through faith (Romans 3:22).

Righteous, righteousness, and justify all share the same Greek root word. When believers trust "he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10), they are confident of their standing before God (Romans 1:17).

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.

ROMANS 3:22

STUDY RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE SCRIPTURES

Acts 3:14

Romans 3:10,20

1 John 2:1

Galatians 4:4

2 Corinthians 5:21

Romans 5:17

Romans 3:22

Isaiah 61:10

Romans 1:17

Sacrament, The Lord's Supper

The Holy Spirit powerfully shares the gospel through the sacraments. He uses baptism to produce faith and save people. He uses the Lord's Supper to strengthen believers' faith by conveying the forgiveness of sins through it (Matthew 26:28).

Jesus called the Lord's Supper "the new testament in my blood" (Luke 22:20). This is a reference to the unilateral agreement God brought into effect through Jesus. **See Covenant.** You have been written into the will because of Christ's atonement.

The Lord's Supper is not about me renewing my covenant with God or a reminder to improve. It is the proof of forgiveness in Jesus' body and blood. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). The Lord's Supper is God's way of lovingly saying, "Look at all I have done for you." This personal assurance of forgiveness gives Christians renewed confidence in salvation and eternal life.

STUDY THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE SCRIPTURES

Matthew 26:28

Luke 22:20

Hebrews 9:22

Salvation

Salvation, literally “being saved,” is God’s rescue of sinners. This is not a plan we must follow. Instead, it refers to the freedom won for all the world by Jesus’ saving work (John 3:17).

See also Redemption.

Salvation is not only deliverance from physical death (1 Corinthians 15:22), but also sin (Hebrews 9:26), and eternal death (Romans 6:23). Since salvation is complete (John 19:30), believers have full confidence they are forgiven of their sins and will live eternally with God (John 3:16).

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

JOHN 3:16

STUDY SALVATION IN THE SCRIPTURES

John 3:16-17

1 Corinthians 15:22

Hebrews 9:26

John 19:30

Savior

Savior is simply the “one who saves.” Although God sent men to deliver his people at different points in Israel’s history (Moses, Gideon, David, etc.), they all pointed ahead to the one Savior who would come to rescue the world, Jesus Christ.

While Jesus’ commands are important, no one can be saved by obedience to the law (Romans 3:20). For this reason, looking to Jesus as our example can never save us.

The Bible emphasizes Jesus as our substitute. He lived perfectly under the law (Galatians 4:4) for us. His perfect record is given to us (Romans 4:25).

See Justification.

He also took the punishment for all sin (1 John 2:2). By providing perfection and removing sin, Jesus rescued us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13).

As evidenced by the numerous times the Bible describes Jesus’ saving work “for us,” Savior is best understood as “Jesus is our substitute.”

STUDY THE SAVING WORK OF JESUS IN THE SCRIPTURES

Romans 3:20

Romans 4:25

Galatians 4:4

1 John 2:2

Galatians 3:13

Sin

Sin is a violation of God's law. It positions us against God's perfect will. This rebellion is so serious that even a single offense makes us guilty of all before God (James 2:10). No amount of human effort or blood of animals can remove the stain of sin (Hebrews 10:4).

Sin is prevalent. It includes things we do (sins of commission) and things we fail to do (sins of omission). Sin not only includes breaking the Ten Commandments but breaking any command given by God like "do not worry" (Matthew 6:25 and following), "be content" (Hebrews 13:5), and "pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Since sin is such a serious offense to God, no one with sin can enter his presence. This guilt brings condemnation for all people (Romans 5:18). The punishment is eternal death (Romans 6:23). **See Hell.**

Thankfully, because Jesus' atonement has covered sin, Christians are confident they have forgiveness right now: "In [Jesus] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7).

STUDY SIN IN THE SCRIPTURES

James 2:10
Hebrews 10:4
Matthew 6:25
Hebrews 13:5

1 Thessalonians 5:17
Romans 5:18
Romans 6:23
Ephesians 1:7

Works (Good Works)

The Bible makes it clear that we are not saved by works. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8–9). Mixing works with grace ruins grace. We are saved because of Christ’s work alone.

This does not mean works are unimportant. On the contrary, they flow naturally from faith because Christ now lives in us (Galatians 2:20). Works are the fruit, not the root, of salvation. “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Only believers can do good works (Hebrews 11:6, Galatians 5:22–23).

Christians recognize they have been freed from sin (Romans 6:18) to do good works (Ephesians 2:10). God now works in and through us as a result of our new life through Christ. **See Eternal Life.**

Rather than a duty or obligation, works are done in love (2 Corinthians 5:14) out of thanks for Christ’s saving work. “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

STUDY THE ROLE OF WORKS IN THE SCRIPTURES

Ephesians 2:8–9

Galatians 2:20

John 15:5

Hebrews 11:6

Galatians 5:22–23

Romans 6:18

Ephesians 2:10

2 Corinthians 5:14

1 John 4:19

Next Steps

We hope this guide has been helpful in deepening your understanding of key Biblical terms.

To continue your study, we encourage you to visit **beyeperfect.org** for more resources like this one, answers to your deepest questions and access to media and materials to help you grow in your faith in Jesus.

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