

# Bible Words - Glossary

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## Bible Words

This appendix gives a glossary of words which are used in the Bible but are not in common use.

**angel** - *A messenger, usually from God.*

"Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.'" (Acts 8:26)

**antichrist** - *Someone in opposition to Christ.*

"Dear children, this is the last hour, and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour." (1 John 2:18)

**apostle** - *messenger, one sent*

"I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a teacher of the one true faith to the Gentiles." (1 Timothy 2:7)

**atonement** - *reconciliation, the process by which God and man become "at one".*

"For this reason he [Jesus] had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people." (Hebrews 2:17)

**baptism** - *immersion, submersion in water, to dip (in dye).*

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life". (Romans 6:4)

**blasphemy** - *profane talk, words slanderously spoken. Blasphemy against God is to limit or discredit his power.*

"And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven." (Matthew 12:31)

**cherubim** - *flying creatures which seem to have been used as guards by God in the Old Testament. Cherubim is the plural of cherub.*

"After he drove the man out, [God] placed on the east side of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life." (Genesis 3:24)

**Christ** - *anointed; Greek form of Hebrew word Messiah*

“Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” (Mark 14:61)

**church** - *an assembly or gathering of people. In the New Testament it means the faithful in Christ. It can be used of all the faithful or of a local congregation. The New Testament church is a group of people not a building.*

“If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.” (Matthew 18:17)

**circumcision** - *cutting off the foreskin. Required of all Jewish males.*

“You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you”. (Genesis 17:11)

**covenant** - *agreement, promise or pledge between two parties. Also called testament.*

“Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.” (Hebrews 9:15)

**covet** - *To earnestly want material possessions, particularly something belonging to someone else.*

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house. You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, . . . or anything that belongs to your neighbour.” (Exodus 20:17)

**crucifixion** - *an ancient method of execution where the victim was bound or nailed alive to a cross. It resulted in a slow and painful death.*

“He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.” (Matthew 27:26)

**demon** - *an evil spirit. In the New Testament, people with illnesses are described as “having demons”. This reflects the medical thinking of the day.*

“A man approached Jesus and knelt before him. ‘Lord have mercy on my son,’ he said. ‘He has seizures and is suffering greatly.’ . . . Jesus rebuked the demon and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.” (Matthew 17:14–18)

**devil** - *false accuser, one prone to slander*

“Then Jesus replied, ‘Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.’ ” (John 6:70)

**disciple** - *a learner, pupil, student*

“The disciple is not above his teacher; but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.” (Luke 6:40)

**eternal** - *age lasting, perpetual*

"[Jesus] became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him." (Hebrews 5:9)

**exhort** - *Admonish, entreat, warn, urge.*

"Finally, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, you do so more and more." (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

**faith** - *belief or trust*

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1)

**Gentile** - *A person who is not a Jew. The New Testament sometimes uses the word 'Greek' to mean Gentile, even if the person is not actually Greek.*

". . . but glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." (Romans 2:10)

**God** - *usually a translation of the Hebrew "elohim" or the Greek "theos". It means God as Creator and ruler, the Almighty One.*

**gospel** - *glad tidings or good news*

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the among the people". (Matthew 4:23)

**hell** - *grave, pit. It is a translation of the Hebrew sheol or the Greek hades or Gehenna. Sheol and hades both mean 'grave'. Gehenna was the name of the valley south of Jerusalem which was used for burning the bodies of criminals and other rubbish.*

"Seeing what was ahead, [David] spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that he was not abandoned to hell, nor did his body see decay." (Acts 2:31)

**holy** - *sacred, set apart, separate*

"Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy' ". (Leviticus 19:2)

**idolatry** - *the worship of idols or gods supposedly dwelling in images or represented by them.*

"Therefore my dear friends, flee from idolatry." (1 Corinthians 10:14)

**immortality** - *undying, not subject to death, everlasting*

"[God] who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen." (1 Timothy 6:16)

**Jesus** - *Greek form of Hebrew name Joshua; meaning "Yahweh is salvation"*

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins". (Matthew 1:21)

**justification** - *the act of God declaring men free from guilt and acceptable to him*

"Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men." (Romans 5:18)

**Lord** - *In the Old Testament, "Lord" is a translation of the Hebrew word adonai. In the New Testament it is a translation of the Greek word kyrios. In both cases, it means master. It can be applied to God or to a human master.*

**LORD** - *In the Old Testament only. A translation of the Hebrew name "Yahweh" (or "Jehovah"). It means "He who is" or "He who will continue to be".*

**Lucifer** - *occurs only in the King James (Authorised) version and New King James Version, and only in Isaiah 14:12. It means "morning-star" and is a title given to the King of Babylon (see Isaiah 14:4).*

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" (Isaiah 14:12 KJV)

"How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!" (Isaiah 14:12 NIV)

**mediator** - *One who intervenes between two others to restore peace and friendship*

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5)

**meek** - *Humble, lowly, teachable*

"But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace." (Psalm 37:11)

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5)

**Messiah** - *anointed; Hebrew form of Greek word Christ*

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be 7 weeks, and 62 weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." (Daniel 9:25)

**parable** - *a short story designed to teach a truth or a moral lesson.*

"With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand." (Mark 4:33)

**Passover** - *To pass over. When Israel was in Egypt, the destroying angel passed over the houses of the Israelites killing only the first-born of the Egyptians. The feast of Passover is a commemoration of this deliverance.*

"This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover." (Exodus 12:11)

**patriarch** - *Father and ruler of a family, Abraham and his immediate descendants*

"Just think how great [Melchizedek] was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder". (Hebrews 7:4)

**Pharisees** - *a political party or school among the Jews at the time of Christ. Their name means "separated". Their main purpose was to preserve traditional Judaism. They insisted on a literal interpretation of the law and in following the traditions of the elders. These traditions were called the "oral law" and the Pharisees believed they completed and explained the written law.*

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness." (Matthew 23:23)

**priest** - *a representative of the people to God. Under the Law of Moses, a priest was a male descendant of Aaron of the tribe of Levi, who performed the necessary duties within the tabernacle.*

"He is to wash the inner parts and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the Lord". (Leviticus 1:9)

**psalm** - *a song of praise.*

"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:19)

**repent** - *to be sorry, to turn away from (sin).*

"Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge each one of you according to his ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offences; then sin will not be your downfall." (Ezekiel 18:30)

**resurrection** - *rising from the dead*

"If we have been united with [Jesus] like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection". (Romans 6:5)

**righteousness** - *to be spiritually correct, faultless, without blame*

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." (James 5:16)

**Sabbath** - *the seventh day of the week on which Jews did not do their normal work, but 'rested'.*

"For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." (Exodus 20:11)

**sacrifice** - *to slaughter, kill; metaphorically, anything offered to God*

"Therefore I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship." (Romans 12:1)

**Sadducees** - *a political party among the Jews at the time of Christ. Their name means "the righteous". They were the social elite in Israel and denied the existence of angels and the possibility of life after death. They also rejected the oral law. The Sadducees controlled the priesthood during the time of Jesus.*

"But when [Jesus] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?' " (Matthew 3:7)

**saint** - *Holy one, one of God's people.*

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 1:1)

**sanctified** - *set apart, made holy, dedicated, consecrated.*

"It is God's will that you should be sanctified; that you should avoid sexual immorality; . . ." (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

**Satan** - *an adversary*

"Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." (Matthew 16:23)

**saviour** - *One who saves*

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen." (2 Peter 3:18)

**scribe** - *A clerk, especially a public servant or secretary. In the New Testament, a scribe was one who copied, studied and taught the law.*

"So Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah, and as Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote on it all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them." (Jeremiah 36:32)

**seraphim** - *Literally 'fiery creatures'. Beings with six wings each which Isaiah saw in his vision of the Lord in the temple. Seraphim is the plural of seraph.*

"Above him were seraphim, each with six wings; With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying." (Isaiah 6:2)

**sin** - *to disobey God's commandments*

"Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3:4)

**soul** - *that which breathes, the breathing substance/being, life, creature*

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul".  
(Genesis 2:7)

**spirit** - *wind or breath. The 'spirit' of a person is their inner being or character. The "Holy Spirit" or "Spirit of God" is God's power and, sometimes, his character.*

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them." (Acts 2:4)

"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." (Galatians 5:16)

**tabernacle** - *dwelling place, tent, portable temple of worship*

"Make the tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them by a skilled craftsman." (Exodus 26:1)

**temple** - *sanctuary, place of worship*

"Solomon gave orders to build a temple for the Name of the Lord and a royal palace for himself." (2 Chronicles 2:1)

**temptation** - *The trial of a person's integrity or an enticement to sin.*

"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction." (1 Timothy 6:9)

**testament** - *see covenant.*

**tongue** - *A particular language of any people.*

"Cretans and Arabians—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own our tongues!"  
(Acts 2:11)