

50 GREEK WORDS

Every Christian Should Know



Word	Definition	Scripture
1. Adelphos Adelphe ah-dell-FAWS ah-dell-FAY ἀδελφός ἀδελφή	brother, sister, fellow Christian	Matt. 12:49–50 “Pointing to his disciples, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers . For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.’” Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 7:15; 2 Cor. 13:11
2. Agape ah-GAH-pay ἀγάπη	love, affection, warm regard	Matt. 22:37–38 “ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment.” Matt. 22:39; Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 13:1–13
3. Aletheia ah-LAY-thay-ah ἀλήθεια	truth, truthfulness, reality	John 14:6 “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 18:37–38; Rom. 1:18; 1 John 4:6
4. Anastasis ah-NAH-stah-sis ἀνάστασις	resurrection, rising, arise	John 11:25 “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life.’” Luke 20:37; Rom. 6:5; 1 Cor. 15:21
5. Anthropos AHN-throw-paws ἄνθρωπος	man, humankind, people	Mark 1:17 “‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people .’” John 1:4; 19:5; Rom. 5:18
6. Aphimi af-EE-ay-mee ἀφίημι	dismiss, release, forgive, leave	Matt. 6:12 “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Matt. 9:6; Luke 18:29; John 16:32
7. Apokalupsis ah-paw-KAH-loop-sis ἀποκάλυψις	revelation, disclosure, apocalypse	1 Peter 1:13 “Set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.” Luke 2:26; 1 Cor. 1:7; Eph. 1:17
8. Basileia bah-sil-AY-ah βασιλεία	kingdom, kingship, royal reign	Matt. 18:3 “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” Luke 12:32; John 3:5; 2 Peter 1:11

Insights

The New Testament authors referred to their fellow Christians as brothers and sisters. This gives us a profound insight into how the first Christians viewed each other—as adopted children in the family of God: “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.... The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship” (Rom. 8:14–15).

The English word *love* can be used lightly (“I love pizza”) or seriously (“I love you”). In the Bible, the word *agape* does not describe personal preference, but a heartfelt affection for another person, which causes one to sacrifice for the other’s well-being. This is the way “God so loved the world,” by giving up his only Son for its well-being (John 3:16).

Truth is not something that people make up themselves; truth is what is real. *Aletheia* is whatever agrees with reality and is trustworthy. Ultimately, what is true is what corresponds to what God says is true, because he is the ultimate reality. Christians follow Jesus for many reasons, but one of them is because he is *aletheia*.

The word *anastasis* is a compound word of a preposition meaning “up” (*ana*) and the verb for “I stand” (*histemi*). *Anastasis* is used to refer both to Jesus “rising up” from the grave with new life after he was crucified and to the future resurrection of believers.

When the New Testament authors used the word *anthropos*, they were sometimes referring to a male person (John 3:1), but usually they meant humanity collectively. God “wants all *people* to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).

Aphiemi is most often used in the New Testament to mean “send away,” “let go,” or “leave,” such as when the disciples *left* their fishing nets behind to follow Jesus (Mark 1:18). When used in the context of sins, *aphiemi* is usually translated as “forgive.” A forgiven person is set free, having had their spiritual debts dismissed.

The English word *apocalypse* is a rendering of *apokalupsis*, the title of the book of Revelation. Since Jesus’s return is associated with the end of the world, *apocalypse* evokes thoughts of worldwide disasters. However, the Greek word simply means “a revealing.” Jesus’s return is the time when he will be revealed.

The kingdom of God is a rich theological concept. Jesus proclaimed that heaven’s kingdom had come in his ministry. The royal rule of God, his dominion, had begun to spread when Jesus was on earth, but it will not be fully established until Jesus returns. Christians experience some of the kingdom now on earth, but not all of it yet.

Word	Definition	Scripture
9. Chara ka-RAH χαρά	joy, gladness, delight	John 16:22 “Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy .” Luke 2:10; Heb. 10:34; 1 Peter 1:8–9
10. Charis KAH-ris χάρις	grace, favor, goodwill	Rom. 11:5–6 “There is a remnant chosen by grace . And if by grace , then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace .” Eph. 2:7; 2 Tim. 2:1; Heb. 4:16
11. Charizomai kah-RIH-zoh-my χαρίζομαι	pardon, forgive, give freely	Col. 2:13 “God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.” Luke 7:42–43; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13
12. Christos cris-TAWS Χριστός	Christ, Messiah, anointed one	Mark 8:29 “[Jesus] asked them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered him, ‘You are the Christ .’” (ESV) Matt. 24:4–5; Acts 2:36; Rev. 12:10–11
13. Dechomai DEH-kaw-my δέχομαι	receive, welcome, approve	Matt. 10:40 “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.” Luke 9:48; Acts 7:59; 1 Thess. 1:6–7
14. Dikaioo dih-kai-AW-oh δικαιοῶ	justify, vindicate, make free	Rom. 8:33 “Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies .” Rom. 5:1; Gal. 3:11; Titus 3:7
15. Doxa DAW-ksah δόξα	radiance, splendor, glory	2 Cor. 3:18 “We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory , are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory , which comes from the Lord.” Matt. 16:27; John 17:5; 1 Peter 5:1–2
16. Ekklesia eck-clay-SEE-ah ἐκκλησία	assembly, church, congregation	Acts 5:11 “Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.” Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 15:9; Col. 1:18

Insights

Chara is much more than a feeling of happiness; it is a serious gladness that can be present even in very difficult times. This joy is a delight in something that satisfies the soul, which can often make people happy but does not mean they have to be cheerful. In Scripture, God's glory and goodness are the sources of joy.

Charis is a voluntary act of favor or an unprompted gift. This is how God's salvation is described in the Bible—a voluntary act of grace that he gives to the world. It cannot be earned or lost; it is a gift to be received by trusting in Jesus.

Based on the same root as *charis*, *charizomai* means to forgive. This is an act of pardoning, which should prompt gratitude on behalf of the person being forgiven, reflecting the graciousness of the person doing the pardoning. God is said to *charizomai* our sins, pardoning us from the ultimate consequence of sin: eternal death.

Christ is an English rendering of the Greek word *christos*. This is not a personal name, but a title: Anointed One or Messiah. (Some English Bibles translate *christos* as *Messiah*.) The Jewish people in Jesus's time awaited a Messiah, a person endowed with a special portion of God's Spirit, to deliver them from oppression and establish God's kingdom. Jesus is God's chosen Messiah for the whole world.

In certain contexts, *dechomai* can mean to receive an item, like a gift or prize, but in the New Testament, it usually means to welcome a person. Since Jesus and God the Father are one, any person who receives (or welcomes) Jesus receives God the Father also.

To justify means to prove an action or person morally right, or otherwise innocent. We might say that a person can justify his or her actions, and *dikaioo* has this meaning, but it can also mean to free someone from legal accusation. This is what God does for those who trust in Jesus—he frees them from a guilty verdict.

Doxa can refer to the brightness of a thing, such as the sun. When *doxa* is used to describe people or God, it refers to their beauty and awesome appearance or their honor and reputation. *Doxa* can also refer to a manifestation of God's presence (Rev. 21:23).

In the New Testament, *ekklesia* can refer to a general gathering or assembly, a local gathering of Christians, or to all Christians as a single group. When you read the word *church*, it may bring up thoughts of pews and pulpits, but an *ekklesia* in Bible times simply meant Christians who met together in homes to worship and fellowship.