THE QUESTION

What did the early Christians believe about confession of sins?

Asked by a THF member on May 22, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 14 numbered quotations · the 30 early Christian passages and 124 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/what-did-the-early-christians-believe-about-confession-of-sins

The short answer *From the text: says what the passages say*

Early Christians taught that believers should confess their sins to God, humbly and without delay, and ask His pardon. Converts confessed past sins before baptism, and serious sinners confessed in the church, where leaders examined their repentance before restoring them. Church prayers also asked God together to forgive every kind of sin.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
SHARING WITH AN AI?	Every quotation here comes from The Historic Faith's library. If you paste this study into an AI, anything it adds beyond these pages comes from that AI, not from us.

IN THIS STUDY

1	Believers should confess their sins to God	2
2	God invited Adam to confess	2
3	Converts confessed their sins before baptism	3
4	Confess now, while there is still time	3
5	Some confessed their sins publicly	4
6	Church leaders examined penitents before restoring them	5
7	The church prayed together for forgiveness	5
	What these passages don't tell us	6
	The Sources: 30 early Christian passages and 124 Bible verses, with links	6

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don't republish.

POINT 1 OF 7

Believers should confess their sins to God

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Apostolic Constitutions command believers to confess their sins to God, who wants the sinner to repent. Lactantius says that whenever we fail in deed or word we should turn quickly, admit the offense and ask pardon. He adds that even the upright should keep confessing to God in humility.

1 "You shall confess your sins to the Lord your God, and you shall not add to them, so that it may be well with you from the Lord your God, who does not will the death of a sinner, but his repentance."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 22, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

2 "So, when we happen to fail either in deed or in word, we may immediately come to a better mind, confess that we have offended, and beg pardon from God."

later in the same passage

"But we, even though there is no offense of ours, still ought to confess to God, and beg pardon for our faults, and give thanks even in evils."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Lactantius,** *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* 67 (c. 290–320 AD) **Source 28, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 7

God invited Adam to confess

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Theophilus reads God's question to Adam in the garden as an act of patience. God knew where Adam was, but He asked so that Adam would have a chance to repent and admit what he had done.

3 "And when God called and said, "Where are you, Adam?" God did this not because He did not know, but because, being long-suffering, He gave him an opportunity to repent and confess."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Theophilus of Antioch,** *To Autolycus* 26 (c. 169–183 AD) **Source 3, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don't republish.

POINT 3 OF 7

Converts confessed their sins before baptism

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Tertullian tells those preparing for baptism to pray, fast and confess all their past sins, following the people who came to John. Hippolytus pictures John the Baptist saying he could not baptize anyone until they had first fully confessed their sins.

4 “They should also confess all their past sins, so that they may express the meaning even of John's baptism. For Scripture says, "They were baptized, confessing their own sins."”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On Baptism* 20 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 8, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

5 “I, O Lord, baptize with the baptism of repentance, and I cannot baptize those who come to me unless they first confess fully their sins.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hippolytus,** *Discourse on the Holy Theophany* 1 (c. 200–236 AD) **Source 14, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 7

Confess now, while there is still time

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Cyprian urges each sinner to confess while still alive, when confession can still be received. An early writer against Novatian calls for full confession, because heaven, the angels and Christ rejoice when a sinner repents.

6 “I beg you, beloved brothers, let each person confess his own sin while the one who has sinned is still in this world, while his confession can still be received, and while the satisfaction and remission made by the priests are pleasing to the Lord.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Treatises* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 15, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

7 “Let us make our full confession, since the powers of heaven rejoice over our repentance, all the angels rejoice, and Christ also rejoices.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Anonymous,** *Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian* 1 **Source 30, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 5 OF 7

Some confessed their sins publicly

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Tertullian gives thanks when Christians publicly confess their sins. Irenaeus mentions people deceived by false teachers who made public confession of their sins, while others were too ashamed, and a teacher who confessed openly in the church more than once.

8 “To us, it is a matter for thankfulness if we now publicly confess our iniquities or our shameful acts.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On Baptism* 20 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 8, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

9 “Some of them, indeed, make a public confession of their sins, but others are ashamed to do this, and silently, despairing of attaining the life of God, some of them have completely apostatized, while others hesitate between the two choices and experience what is expressed in the proverb, “neither without nor within,” possessing this as the result from the seed of the children of knowledge.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book I* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 5, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

10 “He often entered the Church, openly confessed, stayed sometimes teaching secretly, and then confessed again publicly.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book III* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 4, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

POINT 6 OF 7

Church leaders examined penitents before restoring them

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Cyprian says confession was made after the penitent's life had been examined, and that communion followed the laying on of hands. The Apostolic Constitutions tell the bishop to examine the offender, set weeks of fasting to fit the offense, and then receive him back.

11 "For in lesser sins, which are not committed against God, repentance may be completed in a set period of time, and confession may be made after an examination of the life of the one doing repentance."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 17, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

12 "If, after examination, you find that he is repentant and fit to be received into the church at all, then after you have afflicted him with days of fasting according to the measure of his offense—as two, three, five, or seven weeks—set him free, and speak to him in the way that is proper for reproof, instruction, and exhortation to a sinner, for his correction."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 21, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 7 OF 7

The church prayed together for forgiveness

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Liturgy of St. James leads the whole congregation to ask God for forgiveness. Its prayer names sins done willingly and unwillingly, knowingly and in ignorance, trusting that God's Spirit knows them better than we do.

13 "Let us ask the Lord for forgiveness and remission of our sins and transgressions."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Early Liturgies,** *Divine Liturgy of St. James* 1 (c. 200–400 AD) **Source 10, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don't republish.

14 "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, Lamb and Shepherd, who takes away the sin of the world, who freely forgave the debt of the two debtors and gave remission of her sins to the woman who was a sinner, who gave healing to the paralytic along with the remission of his sins: forgive, remit, and pardon, O God, our offenses, voluntary and involuntary, in knowledge and in ignorance, by transgression and by disobedience, which Your all-holy Spirit knows better than Your servants do."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Early Liturgies,** *Divine Liturgy of St. James* 1 (c. 200–400 AD) **Source 12, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don't tell us

- These passages do not lay out one fixed form of confession or say when it had to be public or private.
- Several of them deal with grave sins and church discipline rather than everyday faults.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 30 early Christian passages and 124 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–30, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 31–120, in Bible order), then 34 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF's updated English unless marked "1885 English" (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). "… [continues online]" marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *30 passages from 14 writers*

Barnabas, *c. 70–132 AD · source 1*

1 *Epistle of Barnabas* (1885 English; on point 1) "shalt confess thy sins. Thou shalt not go to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of light… [continues online] **read ›**

Hermas, *c. 90–150 AD · source 2*

2 *Shepherd* except the one that happens when we go down into the water and receive forgiveness of our former sins." He said to me, "What you heard was sound teaching, for… [continues online] **read ›**

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don't republish.

Theophilus of Antioch, *c. 169–183 AD · source 3*

3 *To Autolycus* 26 (1885 English) **Quote 3, page 2** “being long-suffering, He gave him an opportunity of repentance and confession… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 4–5*

4 *Against Heresies: Book III* **Quote 10, page 4** “the Church, openly confessed, stayed sometimes teaching secretly, and then confessed again publicly. Ultimately, after being condemned for false teaching, he was excommunicated from the fellowship of the brethren. Marcion… [continues online] **read ›**

5 *Against Heresies: Book I* **Quote 9, page 4** “of them, indeed, make a public confession of their sins… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 6–7*

6 *Stromata* 2.13 “the person who has received forgiveness of sins ought not to sin anymore. For besides the first and only repentance from sins, which is from the sins of the former… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *Stromata* 2.12 (1885 English) “of sins is therefore different from repentance… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 8–9*

8 *On Baptism* 20 **Quotes 4, 8, pages 3, 4** “and pray," says the Lord, "lest you fall into temptation… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *Against Marcion* 24 (on point 1) evil deed or error. But that is not always what it means. For even in good works there can be a confession of repentance, as a reproach and condemnation of… [continues online] **read ›**

Early Liturgies, *c. 200–400 AD · sources 10–12*

10 *Divine Liturgy of St. James* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 13, page 5** “us entreat from the Lord forgiveness and remission of our sins and transgressions… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Divine Liturgy of St. James* 1 (1885 English; on point 7) “the remission of our sins, and forgiveness of our transgressions, and for our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger, and constraint, and uprising against us of enemies… [continues online] **read ›**

12 *Divine Liturgy of St. James* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 14, page 6** “remit, pardon, O God, our offenses, voluntary and involuntary, in knowledge and in ignorance, by transgression and by disobedience, which Your all-holy Spirit knows better than Your servants do… [continues online] **read ›**

Hippolytus, *c. 200–236 AD · sources 13–14*

13 *Exegetical Fragments* (on point 1) “in the first multiple. And the fiftieth psalm is a prayer for the forgiveness of sins, and a confession. For just as, according to the Gospel, the fiftieth received remission… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Discourse on the Holy Theophany* 1 **Quote 5, page 3** “O Lord, baptize with the baptism of repentance, and I cannot baptize those who come to me unless they first confess fully their sins… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 15–18*

15 *Treatises* (1885 English) **Quote 6, page 3** “I entreat you, beloved brethren, that each one should confess his own sin, while he who has sinned is still in this world, while his confession may be received, while… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *Epistles* (on point 6) I am amazed that some are so stubborn that they think repentance should not be granted to the lapsed, or that pardon should be denied to those who repent, when… [continues online] **read ›**

17 *Epistles* (1885 English) **Quote 11, page 5** “as in smaller sins which are not committed against God, penitence may be fulfilled in a set time, and confession may be made with investigation of the life of him… [continues online] **read ›**

18 *Epistles* (1885 English; on point 1) “each one, acknowledging his own sins, even now put off the conversation of the old man… [continues online] **read ›**

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 19–24*

19 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 6) “same is the case of him who without cause is separated by his bishop… [continues online] **read ›**

20 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 4) having hope of salvation, they may be converted, and may pray to God with tears because of their sins, and may repent from their hearts, and so calm His displeasure… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) **Quote 12, page 5** “if upon examination you find that he is penitent, and fit to be received at all into the Church when you have afflicted him his days of fasting, according to… [continues online] **read ›**

22 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) **Quote 1, page 2** “30:6 You shall confess your sins unto the Lord your God… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) “he who sins after his baptism, unless he repent and forsake his sins, shall be condemned to hell-fire… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 6) acquainted with the Scriptures. You are the voice of God and witnesses of His will. You bear the sins of all and intercede for all. As you have heard, the… [continues online] **read ›**

Commodianus, *c. 250–300 AD · source 25*

25 *Writings* (1885 English; on point 4) “confession of your fault shall not be in vain… [continues online] **read ›**

Lactantius, *c. 290–320 AD · sources 26–28*

26 *Divine Institutes* 25 (1885 English; on point 1) “any evil, let him make amends, and let him confess that the evil has happened to him on account of his faults… [continues online] **read ›**

27 *Divine Institutes* 17 (1885 English; on point 1) “being desirous of promoting our life and salvation in accordance with His own goodness, in that circumcision He has set before us repentance, that if we lay open our hearts… [continues online] **read ›**

28 *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* 67 **Quote 2, page 2** “So, when we happen to fail either in deed or in word, we may immediately come to a better mind, confess that we have offended, and beg pardon from God… [continues online] **read ›**

Peter of Alexandria, *c. 300–311 AD · source 29*

29 *Canonical Epistle* (on point 6) since they escaped the notice of their persecutors by doing this, let a penalty of six months of penance be imposed on them. For in this way they will profit… [continues online] **read ›**

Anonymous · *source 30*

30 *Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian* 1 **Quote 7, page 4** “2:10-11. Therefore He says, "First tell your sins, that you may be justified… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *90 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

31 **Exodus 10:17** Now therefore forgive my sin this once more, and pray to the Lord your God, and let him take this death away from me.” **read ›**

32 **Leviticus 4:14** and the sin which they have sinned in it becomes known to them, then the congregation shall bring an unblemished calf from the oxen as a sin offering and bring it to the doors of the tabernacle of witness. **read ›**

33 **Leviticus 5:5** then he shall confess the sin concerning the things in which he has sinned by that sin. **read ›**

34 **Leviticus 5:6** And for what he has trespassed against the Lord, for the sin which he has sinned, he shall bring a female from the sheep, a lamb, or a female goat from the goats, as a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin which he has sinned, and the sin shall be forgiven him. **read ›**

35 **Leviticus 5:13** And the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin which he has sinned in any one of these things, and it shall be forgiven him. What is left shall belong to the priest, like the sacrifice of fine flour.’” **read ›**

36 **Leviticus 5:16** What he has sinned in the holy things he shall repay, and he shall add the fifth part to it and give it to the priest; and the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and it shall be forgiven him. **read ›**

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

37 **Leviticus 16:24** He shall bathe his body in water in a holy place and put on his garment; then he shall go out and offer his whole burnt offering and the whole burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself, for his house, and for the people, as for the priests. **read ›**

38 **Leviticus 19:22** The priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before the Lord for the sin that he sinned, and the sin that he sinned shall be forgiven him. **read ›**

39 **Leviticus 26:40** Then they shall confess their sins and the sins of their fathers, that they transgressed and disregarded me, and that they walked contrary before me, **read ›**

40 **Numbers 5:7** shall confess the sin that he has committed, and shall repay what he owes for the wrong: he shall repay the principal and add its fifth part to it, and shall repay it to the one against whom he trespassed. **read ›**

41 **Numbers 15:24** then it shall be, if it is done unintentionally, out of the sight of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one calf from the herd, unblemished, for a whole burnt offering, for a pleasing aroma to the Lord, with its sacrifice and its drink offering as prescribed, and one male goat of the goats for a sin offering. **read ›**

42 **Numbers 16:22** But they fell on their faces and said, “O God, the God of the spirits and of all flesh, if one man has sinned, shall the wrath of the Lord be on all the congregation?” **read ›**

43 **Deuteronomy 25:2** then if the ungodly man deserves lashes, you shall lay him down before the judges, and they shall whip him before them according to his ungodliness. **read ›**

44 **1 Kings 8:31** If a man commits any sin against his neighbor, and he takes an oath upon himself that puts him under a curse, and he comes and confesses before your altar in this house, **read ›**

45 **2 Chronicles 6:37** and they turn their heart in their land to which they were carried away, and also turn and plead with you in their captivity, saying, ‘We have sinned, we have acted lawlessly, we have done unrighteously,’ **read ›**

46 **Ezra 9:8** And now our God has been gracious to us, to leave us a remnant for salvation and to give us a support in the place of his sanctuary, to enlighten our eyes and to give us a little reviving in our slavery. **read ›**

47 **Nehemiah 9:2** The children of Israel separated themselves from every foreigner, and they stood and confessed their sins and the acts of lawlessness of their fathers. (Septuagint 2 Esdras 19:2 (Nehemiah 9:2 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

48 **Psalms 13:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

49 **Psalms 32:1** Of understanding, of David. Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. (Septuagint Psalm 31:1 (Psalm 32:1 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

50 **Psalms 32:5** I made my sin known, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my iniquity against myself to the Lord”; and you forgave the ungodliness of my heart. Pause. (Septuagint Psalm 31:5 (Psalm 32:5 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

51 **Psalms 38:18** For I will declare my iniquity, and be anxious over my sin. (Septuagint Psalm 37:19 (Psalm 38:18 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

52 **Proverbs 28:13** He who covers his own ungodliness will not prosper, but he who sets forth rebukes will be loved. **read ›**

53 **Isaiah 14:3** And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will give you rest from your anguish and your anger, and from your hard slavery, in which you served them. **read ›**

54 **Jeremiah 18:13** Therefore thus says the Lord: Ask now among the nations, who has heard such very dreadful things as the virgin of Israel has done? **read ›**

55 **Jeremiah 31:1** At that time, said the Lord, I will be God to the family of Israel, and they shall be my people. (Septuagint Jeremiah 38:1 (Jeremiah 31:1 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

56 **Jeremiah 31:5** For you have planted vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; plant, and praise. (Septuagint Jeremiah 38:5 (Jeremiah 31:5 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

57 **Jeremiah 31:18** I have heard a report of Ephraim lamenting: “You disciplined me, and I was disciplined; like a calf I was not taught. Turn me back, and I will turn back, for you are the Lord my God. (Septuagint Jeremiah 38:18 (Jeremiah 31:18 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

58 **Lamentations 1:7** Zain. Jerusalem remembered the days of her humiliation and of her rejection, all her desirable things that were from days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the oppressor, and there was none to help her; her enemies saw it and laughed at her dwelling. **read ›**

59 **Lamentations 1:8** Heth. Jerusalem has sinned a sin; therefore she has become a thing tossed about; all who honored her have humbled her, for they have seen her shame; and she herself groaned and turned backward. **read ›**

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

60 **Lamentations 1:12** Lamed. All you who pass by on the way, turn and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which has come upon me; the Lord, who spoke in me, has humbled me in the day of the anger of his wrath. **read ›**

61 **Amos 1:5** And I will break the bars of Damascus, and utterly destroy the inhabitants from the plain of On, and cut off a tribe from the men of Haran; and the select people of Syria shall be taken captive, says the Lord. **read ›**

62 **1 Esdras 8:91** While Ezra was praying and making confession, weeping and lying on the ground before the temple, a very great crowd gathered to him from Jerusalem, men and women and young men; for there was great weeping among the multitude. **read ›**

63 **1 Esdras 9:8** Now therefore make confession and give glory to the Lord God of our fathers, **read ›**

64 **Tobit 13:3** Give thanks to him, you children of Israel, before the nations; for he has scattered us among them. **read ›**

65 **Wisdom of Solomon 1:5** For the holy Spirit of discipline will flee from deceit, and will withdraw from foolish thoughts, and will be rebuked when unrighteousness comes in. **read ›**

66 **Wisdom of Solomon 4:20** They will come in dread when their sins are reckoned up, and their lawless deeds will convict them to their face. **read ›**

67 **Wisdom of Solomon 14:26** disturbance of the good, forgetfulness of favors, defilement of souls, confusion of sex, disorder in marriage, adultery, and shameless conduct. **read ›**

68 **Wisdom of Sirach 3:30** Water will quench a blazing fire, and an act of mercy will make atonement for sins. **read ›**

69 **Wisdom of Sirach 4:26** Do not be ashamed to confess your sins, and do not force the current of a river. **read ›**

70 **Wisdom of Sirach 8:5** Do not insult a man who turns from sin; remember that we are all under penalty. **read ›**

71 **Wisdom of Sirach 17:24** Yet to those who repent he has granted a way back, and he has encouraged those whose endurance was failing. **read ›**

72 **Wisdom of Sirach 17:25** Turn back to the Lord and forsake your sins; make your prayer before his face and lessen your offense. **read ›**

73 **Wisdom of Sirach 18:21** Before you fall sick, humble yourself, and in the time of sins, show your turning back. **read ›**

74 **Wisdom of Sirach 20:3** and he who confesses will be kept from loss. **read ›**

75 **Wisdom of Sirach 21:1** My child, have you sinned? Do not do so again, and pray concerning your former sins. **read ›**

76 **Wisdom of Sirach 28:2** Forgive your neighbor the wrong he has done, and then, when you pray, your sins will be released. **read ›**

77 **Wisdom of Sirach 38:10** Put away trespass, and direct your hands rightly, and cleanse your heart from all sin. **read ›**

78 **Wisdom of Sirach 44:16** Enoch pleased the Lord and was taken away, an example of repentance to the generations. **read ›**

79 **Baruch 1:14** And you shall read this book that we have sent to you, to make confession in the house of the Lord on the day of a feast and on the days of the appointed season. **read ›**

80 **Baruch 1:17** because we have sinned before the Lord, **read ›**

81 **2 Maccabees 12:42** and they turned to pleading, asking that the sin that had been committed might be wholly blotted out. And the noble Judas urged the multitude to keep themselves free from sin, since they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen. **read ›**

82 **3 Maccabees 2:24** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

83 **4 Maccabees 4:12** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

84 **4 Maccabees 14:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

85 **1 Enoch 1:7** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

86 **1 Enoch 1:8** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

87 **1 Enoch 1:12** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

88 **1 Enoch 13:6** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

89 **1 Enoch 22:10** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

90 **1 Enoch 95:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

91 **1 Enoch 104:9** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

92 **Matthew 3:6** They were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. **read ›**

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don't republish.

93 **Matthew 3:11** I indeed baptize you in water for repentance, but he who comes after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit. **read ›**

94 **Matthew 18:15** “If your brother sins against you, go, show him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained back your brother. **read ›**

95 **Mark 1:4** John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching the baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins. **read ›**

96 **Luke 3:3** He came into all the region around the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for remission of sins, **read ›**

97 **John 20:23** If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone’s sins, they have been retained.” **read ›**

98 **Acts 1:16** “Brothers, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. **read ›**

99 **Acts 2:38** Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **read ›**

100 **Acts 3:19** Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, **read ›**

101 **Acts 8:22** Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to God that perhaps the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. **read ›**

102 **Acts 13:24** after John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to Israel before Jesus’ coming. **read ›**

103 **Acts 19:4** Paul said, “John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Christ Jesus.” **read ›**

104 **Acts 19:18** Many also of those who had believed came, confessing and declaring their deeds. **read ›**

105 **Acts 22:16** Now why do you wait? Arise, be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’ **read ›**

106 **1 Corinthians 1:14** I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, **read ›**

107 **1 Corinthians 1:17** For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be emptied of its power. **read ›**

108 **1 Corinthians 5:5** that such a one be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. **read ›**

109 **1 Corinthians 11:32** But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. **read ›**

110 **Galatians 6:1** Brothers, even if a man is caught in some fault, you who are spiritual must restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, looking to yourself so that you also are not tempted. **read ›**

111 **Ephesians 4:25** Therefore, putting away falsehood, speak truth each one with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. **read ›**

112 **Colossians 1:14** in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins. **read ›**

113 **2 Thessalonians 3:6** Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from every brother who walks in a disorderly way and not according to the tradition which they received from us. **read ›**

114 **1 Timothy 5:20** Before everyone, rebuke those who sin, so that the rest also may fear. **read ›**

115 **Hebrews 3:13** but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called “today”, lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. **read ›**

116 **Hebrews 12:8** But if you are without discipline, of which all have been made partakers, then you are illegitimate, and not children. **read ›**

117 **James 5:16** Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. A righteous person’s prayer has great power in its working. **read ›**

118 **James 5:19** Brothers, if any among you wanders from the truth and someone turns him back, **read ›**

119 **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **read ›**

120 **Revelation 3:19** All whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. Therefore be zealous and repent. **read ›**

© 2026 The Historic Faith · Library only, never the web · For personal study; please don’t republish.

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *34 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Exodus 20:7

1 Samuel 15:11

Jeremiah 18:11

Jonah 3:9

Matthew 4:1 · 5:42 · 6:12 · 6:34 · 7:7 · 26:41

Luke 6:30 · 6:37 · 11:9 · 22:28 · 23:34

John 1:1 · 1:18 · 3:9 · 8:44

Romans 3:15 · 8:29

1 Corinthians 2:8 · 8:1 · 9:9 · 10:2 · 12:4

Ephesians 6:9

Philippians 2:9

2 Timothy 3:2

Hebrews 6:4 · 10:26 · 12:16

James 1:8

1 John 3:9

Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “What did the early Christians believe about confession of sins?” on May 22, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

Library only. This study was written only from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed above, with a link to read it.

How it was made. Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.

How to cite this study. The Historic Faith, “What did the early Christians believe about confession of sins?” Early Church Questions, published November 9, 2026, https://thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/what-did-the-early-christians-believe-about-confession-of-sins. To cite one quotation, add its number and source, for example “quote 1, source 22.”

© 2026 The Historic Faith. Selection, arrangement and editing by THF; machine-compiled text and public-domain quotations are not claimed. For personal study; please don’t republish.

THEHISTORICFAITH.COM

THE END OF THIS STUDY