THE QUESTION

What did the early Christians believe about good works?

Asked by a THF member on May 22, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 14 numbered quotations · the 64 early Christian passages and 382 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-good-works

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

Early Christian writers taught that our own works do not justify us; God justifies by faith and by his kindness. Yet they insisted that believers must freely obey, repent and do good, because God will judge and reward each person according to their works. A faith that does nothing was a warning sign.

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.

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POINT 1 OF 8

Our own works do not justify us

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

Clement of Rome says we are not justified by our wisdom, godliness or holy works, but by faith. Clement of Alexandria says the same of Abraham, who was justified by faith and not by works.

1 "And we, too, being called by His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works we have accomplished in holiness of heart; but by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all people; to whom be glory forever and ever."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Source 61, page 10** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

2 "But Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Stromata* 1.7 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 28, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 8

We live by God's kindness, not our record

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

Ignatius warns believers not to take God's kindness lightly. If God paid us back only by what we have done, he says, we would not survive. His call is to live as true disciples of Christ.

3 "Let us not be insensitive to His kindness. For if He rewarded us according to our actions, we would cease to exist."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistle to the Magnesians* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 8, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

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POINT 3 OF 8

God will reward each person by works

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

The sermon known as Second Clement says God will give each one a reward by his works, and urges believers to do what is right. Hippolytus describes Christ as Judge giving each what is just by his works.

4 “For He is faithful who promised that He will give each one a reward according to his works. If, therefore, we do what is righteous in the sight of God, we will enter His kingdom and receive the promises, which ear has not heard, nor eye seen, nor have entered into the heart of man.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *Second Epistle* 11 (c. 88–99 AD) **Source 3, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

5 “He, in carrying out the Father's righteous judgment for all, assigns to each what is righteous according to his works.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hippolytus,** *Against Plato* 1 (c. 200–236 AD) **Source 38, page 9** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 8

People freely choose to obey God

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

Irenaeus says God made people free to obey his commands willingly, not by force. Origen says Christ's commands show that keeping them is up to us, and that we are rightly judged if we break them.

6 “This expression of our Lord, “How often I would have gathered your children together, and you would not,” illustrates the ancient law of human freedom, because God made man a free agent from the beginning, possessing his own power, just as he does his own soul, to obey the commands of God voluntarily, and not by God's compulsion.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book IV* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 23, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

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7 “And the Saviour also, when He commands, “But I say unto you, Resist not evil;” and, “Whosoever shall be angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment;” and, “Whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart;” and by any other commandment which He gives, declares that it lies with ourselves to keep what is enjoined, and that we shall reasonably be liable to condemnation if we transgress.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Origen,** *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (c. 215–254 AD) **Source 43, page 9** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 5 OF 8

Christ calls us to act, not only speak

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

Irenaeus says the greater righteousness Christ asks for means believing in the Son, acting and not only speaking, and avoiding even evil desires. Cyprian lists the works of a Christian life that Christ both did and taught.

8 “Next, we must not only speak but also act; for they spoke but did not act. And we must not only abstain from evil deeds but even from the desire for them.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book IV* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 21, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

9 “Now this is the will of God, which Christ both did and taught: humility in conduct; steadfastness in faith; modesty in words; justice in deeds; mercy in works”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Treatises* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 53, page 9** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 8

Faith without its works is in danger

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

Hermas describes believers who stayed in the faith but stopped doing its works, and he calls them to repent quickly. Ignatius says faith does not do the works of unbelief.

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10 “However, they did not depart from God, but remained in the faith, although they were not doing the works of faith.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hermas,** *Shepherd* (c. 90–150 AD) **Source 5, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

11 “Those who are carnal cannot do things that are spiritual, nor can those who are spiritual do things that are carnal, just as faith cannot do the works of unbelief, nor unbelief the works of faith.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 11, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 7 OF 8

True repentance turns to doing good

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

Hermas says the person who repents stops doing wrong and does good generously. Cyprian urges the fallen to rise again by works, but he is careful to say Christ's blood and baptism already freed us from the first death.

12 “He no longer acts wickedly, but does good generously, and humbles and torments his soul because he has sinned.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hermas,** *Shepherd* (c. 90–150 AD) **Source 4, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

13 “This certainly does not mean from that death which the blood of Christ once destroyed, and from which the saving grace of baptism and of our Redeemer has delivered us, but from that death which afterward creeps in through sins.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 51, page 9** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

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POINT 8 OF 8

Love and almsgiving lighten the burden of sin

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

Second Clement urges repentance while there is time and praises almsgiving, fasting, prayer and love. He says love covers many sins and almsgiving lightens their weight.

14 “Love covers a multitude of sins, 1 Peter 4:4, and prayer from a good conscience delivers from death. Blessed is everyone who is found complete in these, for almsgiving lightens the burden of sin.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *Second Epistle* 16 (c. 88–99 AD) **Source 2, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- These passages do not give one formula for how faith and works fit together.
- They do not list exactly which works God requires or how much is enough.
- 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 64 early Christian passages and 382 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–64, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 65–194, in Bible order), then 252 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 *64 passages from 20 writers*

Barnabas, *c. 70–132 AD · source 1*

1 *Epistle of Barnabas* (on point 3) “he is wicked, the reward of wickedness is before him… [continues online] **read ›**

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Clement of Rome, *c. 88–99 AD · sources 2–3*

2 *Second Epistle* 16 (1885 English) **Quote 14, page 6** “then, is alms as repentance from sin… [continues online] **read ›**

3 *Second Epistle* 11 **Quote 4, page 3** “that the sour grape, and then the fully ripened fruit… [continues online] **read ›**

Hermas, *c. 90–150 AD · sources 4–6*

4 *Shepherd* (1885 English) **Quote 12, page 5** “he answered and said to me, I am set over repentance, and I give understanding to all who repent… [continues online] **read ›**

5 *Shepherd* (1885 English) **Quote 10, page 5** “did not, however, depart from God, but remained in the faith, although not working the works of faith… [continues online] **read ›**

6 *Shepherd* (on point 7) repent. But all who will not repent have lost their lives. And as many of them as repented became good, and their dwelling place was appointed within the first walls… [continues online] **read ›**

Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 7–11*

7 *Epistle to the Magnesians* (1885 English; on point 2) “were He to reward us according to our works, we should cease to be… [continues online] **read ›**

8 *Epistle to the Magnesians* (1885 English) **Quote 3, page 2** “were He to reward us according to our works, we should cease to be… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians* (on point 6) “as faith cannot do the works of unbelief, nor unbelief the works of faith… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English; on point 1) be ye steadfast, “for the just shall live by faith;” be ye… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians* **Quote 11, page 5** “as faith cannot do the works of unbelief, nor unbelief the works of faith… [continues online] **read ›**

Polycarp, *c. 100–155 AD · source 12*

12 *Epistle to the Philippians* (on point 2) severe in judgment, as knowing that we are all under a debt of sin… [continues online] **read ›**

Justin Martyr, *c. 130–165 AD · sources 13–14*

13 *Dialogue with Trypho* (1885 English; on point 7) “the goodness and the loving-kindness of God, and His boundless riches, hold righteous and sinless the man who, as Ezekiel tells, repents of sins… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Dialogue with Trypho* (1885 English; on point 7) “works deliverance from death to those who repent of their wickedness and believe upon Him… [continues online] **read ›**

Tatian, *c. 150–180 AD · sources 15–16*

15 *Diatessaron* 23 (1885 English; on point 3) “then shall he reward each man according to his works… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *Diatessaron* 4 (1885 English; on point 7) “17 Matthew 3:8 Do now the fruits which are worthy of repentance… [continues online] **read ›**

Athenagoras, *c. 170–190 AD · sources 17–19*

17 *Resurrection of the Dead* 18 (on point 3) “reward or punishment. Now if righteous judgment gives to both together the proper return for the deeds done, then it is not right that the soul alone should receive the… [continues online] **read ›**

18 *Resurrection of the Dead* 11 (1885 English; on point 3) “further, from the judgment of their Maker upon them according to the time each has lived, and according to the rules by which each has regulated his behaviour — a judgment… [continues online] **read ›**

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19 *Resurrection of the Dead* 19 (on point 3) as some think, but complete insensibility. But if the Maker of men does care about His own works, and if there is anywhere a distinction between those who have lived… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 20–24*

20 *Against Heresies: Book II* (on point 3) “day of retribution, when the Lord will reward each person according to their deeds—that is, the judgment. The acceptable year of the Lord is this current time, in which… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Against Heresies: Book IV* **Quote 8, page 4** that the Lord did not abolish the natural principles of the law, by which man is justified—principles which those justified by faith and who pleased God observed before the… [continues online] **read ›**

22 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (on point 1) taught when he says in the Epistle to the Galatians: “So, the one who gives you the Spirit and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English) **Quote 6, page 3** “those who do it not shall receive the just judgment of God, because they did not work good when they had it in their power so to do… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (on point 1) “God raised from the stones, and placed beside him who was made the leader and forerunner of our faith. This man received the covenant of circumcision after being justified by… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 25–32*

25 *Stromata* 4.6 (on point 3) to them. And He praises those meek by choice, not by necessity. For with the Lord there are both rewards and many mansions, corresponding to people's lives. "Whoever shall… [continues online] **read ›**

26 *Stromata* 2.6 (on point 1) this husband, who is the Word, formerly desolate of the bridegroom. Now "the just shall live by faith," which is according to the covenant and the commandments, since these, which… [continues online] **read ›**

27 *Instructor* 1.6 (on point 1) be revealed, so that the law became our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith has come, we are no… [continues online] **read ›**

28 *Stromata* 1.7 **Quote 2, page 2** “Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith… [continues online] **read ›**

29 *Stromata* 4.22 (on point 3) “it is said, "Behold, the Lord, and His reward is before His face, to give to every one according to his works… [continues online] **read ›**

30 *Stromata* 1.1 (1885 English; on point 3) “every one shall receive his own reward, according to his own work… [continues online] **read ›**

31 *Instructor* 1.8 (1885 English; on point 3) “this also the book of Wisdom plainly says, For mercy and wrath are with Him, for He alone is Lord of both, Lord of propitiations, and pouring forth wrath according… [continues online] **read ›**

32 *Stromata* 2.7 (1885 English) “the commandment works repentance; inasmuch as it deters from what ought not to be done, and enjoins good deeds… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 33–37*

33 *Against Marcion* 18 (1885 English) “6:6 But even if the stimulus of her repentance proceeded from her faith, she heard her justification by faith through her repentance pronounced in the words, Your faith has… [continues online] **read ›**

34 *Against Marcion* 8 (1885 English; on point 3) “this view it is that he informs us how we must all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body… [continues online] **read ›**

35 *Against Marcion* 8 (on point 1) that have come up so often must be set aside. I regret that I still have to argue about the law, after I have so often proved that its replacement… [continues online] **read ›**

36 *Against Marcion* 40 (1885 English; on point 1) “the rest, the apostle must (be permitted to) go on with his own statement, wherein he says that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but… [continues online] **read ›**

37 *Against Marcion* 40 (on point 1) together against the Lord and against His Christ. It was so that from then on man might be justified by the liberty of faith, not by servitude to the law… [continues online] **read ›**

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Hippolytus, *c. 200–236 AD · sources 38–39*

38 *Against Plato* 1 **Quote 5, page 3** "and the unrighteous alike, will be brought before God the Word. For the Father has committed all judgment to Him. And in fulfillment of the Father's counsel, He comes… [continues online] **read ›**

39 *Exegetical Fragments* 1 (1885 English) "in like manner, the Gentiles by faith in Christ prepare for themselves eternal life through good works… [continues online] **read ›**

Origen, *c. 215–254 AD · sources 40–47*

40 *Commentary on John* 6 (on point 7) no other than the Son and faith in Him, while the multitudes, who do not even have a beginning of good things, are asked for all the fruits of repentance… [continues online] **read ›**

41 *Commentary on John* 6 (1885 English; on point 7) "this they are rebuked by John, who has the zeal of Elijah according to the communication of the Holy Spirit… [continues online] **read ›**

42 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (on point 3) "according to your hardness and impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath on the day of judgment and of the revelation of the just judgment of God, who… [continues online] **read ›**

43 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 **Quote 7, page 4** "will render to every one according to his works: to those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and immortality, eternal life… [continues online] **read ›**

44 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 1 (1885 English; on point 4) "show more clearly, however, what we mean, let us take the illustration employed by the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he says, For the earth, which… [continues online] **read ›**

45 *Against Celsus* 13 (on point 3) "any man's work be burned, he shall suffer loss… [continues online] **read ›**

46 *Commentary on John* 2 (on point 1) image of truly pleasing God. The passage that declares that before God no living being shall be justified shows that, compared with God and the righteousness that is in Him… [continues online] **read ›**

47 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 5 (on point 4) that well-known question of theirs. They say that it is written, "A bad tree cannot produce good fruits; for a tree is known by its fruit." What, then, is… [continues online] **read ›**

Gregory Thaumaturgus, *c. 240–270 AD · source 48*

48 *Metaphrase of Ecclesiastes* 12 (1885 English; on point 3) "that you believe that all shall be judged severally in the future, and that every man shall receive the just recompense for his deeds, whether they be good or whether… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 49–54*

49 *Epistles* (on point 3) of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me on that day; and not to me only, but also to all those who love His appearing." 2 Timothy… [continues online] **read ›**

50 *Epistles* (1885 English; on point 7) "those shall not be forsaken by the aid and assistance of the Lord, who meekly, humbly, and with true penitence have persevered in good works… [continues online] **read ›**

51 *Epistles* **Quote 13, page 5** "repent, when it is written, "Remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works," Revelation 2:5. This is clearly said to someone who has plainly… [continues online] **read ›**

52 *Treatises* (1885 English; on point 3) "after your hardness and impenitent heart you store up unto yourself wrath in the day of wrath and of revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who shall render to… [continues online] **read ›**

53 *Treatises* (1885 English) **Quote 9, page 4** "in deeds; mercifulness in works; discipline in morals… [continues online] **read ›**

54 *Epistles* (on point 7) who, by truly repenting, might satisfy God, both as Father and as merciful, by their prayers and works, are misled more deeply to their destruction; and those who might have… [continues online] **read ›**

Commodianus, *c. 250–300 AD · source 55*

55 *Writings* (on point 3) "He will award punishments according to your deeds… [continues online] **read ›**

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Methodius, *c. 270–311 AD · source 56*

56 *Oration Concerning Simeon and Anna* 1 (1885 English; on point 2) “you, and by you, let that justification which is of grace become known beforehand to the Gentiles… [continues online] **read ›**

Lactantius, *c. 290–320 AD · sources 57–59*

57 *Divine Institutes* 1 (1885 English; on point 3) “this remains, that we should treat of the judgment of God, which will then be established when our Lord shall return to the earth to render to every one either… [continues online] **read ›**

58 *Divine Institutes* 24 (on point 7) life is of no help to the man who lives badly, because his later wickedness has destroyed his works of righteousness, so also former sins do not stand in the… [continues online] **read ›**

59 *Divine Institutes* 20 (1885 English; on point 3) “they who have known God shall be judged, and their deeds, that is, their evil works, shall be compared and weighed against their good ones: so that if those which… [continues online] **read ›**

Anonymous · *source 60*

60 *Treatise Against the Heretic Novatian* 1 (1885 English; on point 7) “57:19 that to those who repent, and pray, and labour, restoration is possible, because they would miserably perish, and because they would decline from Christ… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Rome · *sources 61–64*

61 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Quote 1, page 2** “by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty… [continues online] **read ›**

62 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1885 English; on point 3) thus He forewarns us: “Behold, the Lord [cometh], and His reward is before His face, to render to every man according to his work… [continues online] **read ›**

63 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1885 English; on point 5) shall we do, then, brethren? Shall we become slothful in well-doing, and cease from the practice of… [continues online] **read ›**

64 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1885 English; on point 1) Abram believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *130 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

65 **Genesis 15:6** Abram believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. **read ›**

66 **Exodus 22:8** But if the thief is not found, the master of the house shall come before God and swear that he has truly done no wrong in any part of his neighbor’s deposit, (Septuagint Exodus 22:7 (Exodus 22:8 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

67 **Leviticus 7:37** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

68 **Deuteronomy 32:4** God—true are his works, and all his ways are judgment; God is faithful, and there is no unrighteousness; righteous and holy is the Lord. **read ›**

69 **Deuteronomy 33:4** a law, which Moses commanded us, an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob. **read ›**

70 **Ruth 2:12** May the Lord repay your work, and may your reward be full from the Lord God of Israel, to whom you have come, to trust under his wings.” **read ›**

71 **2 Chronicles 6:23** then you shall hear from heaven, and act, and judge your slaves, repaying the lawless by bringing his ways on his own head, and justifying the righteous by repaying him according to his righteousness. **read ›**

72 **2 Chronicles 15:7** But you, be strong, and do not let your hands grow weak, for there is a reward for your work.” **read ›**

73 **Job 34:11** But he repays a man according to what each of them does, and in a man’s path he will find him. **read ›**

74 **Psalms 12:8** The ungodly walk all around; according to your loftiness you have greatly cared for the sons of men. (Septuagint Psalm 11:9 (Psalm 12:8 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

75 **Proverbs 14:19** The evil will fall before the good, and the ungodly will wait at the doors of the righteous. **read ›**

76 **Ecclesiastes 12:14** For God will bring every work into judgment, with everything overlooked, whether it is good or whether it is evil. **read ›**

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77 **Song of Solomon 3:5** I have charged you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the powers and by the strengths of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases. **read ›**

78 **Isaiah 5:17** And those who were plundered shall be fed like bulls, and lambs shall eat the desolate places of those who were taken away. **read ›**

79 **Isaiah 5:25** And the Lord of hosts was enraged in anger against his people, and he laid his hand upon them and struck them; and the mountains were provoked, and their carcasses were like dung in the midst of the road. And for all this his wrath has not turned back, but his hand is still raised. **read ›**

80 **Isaiah 13:3** I am giving command, and I bring them; giants are coming to fulfill my wrath, rejoicing and insulting together. **read ›**

81 **Isaiah 15:3** Wrap yourselves in sackcloth in her squares, and lament on her rooftops and in her lanes; all of you, wail with weeping. **read ›**

82 **Isaiah 64:5** For it will meet those who do what is right, and they will remember your ways. Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; therefore we went astray, (Septuagint Isaiah 64:4 (Isaiah 64:5 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

83 **Jeremiah 17:21** Thus says the Lord: Guard your souls, and do not carry burdens on the Sabbath day, and do not go out through the gates of Jerusalem; **read ›**

84 **Jeremiah 27:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

85 **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 ›**

86 **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 ›**

87 **Ezekiel 22:3** and you shall say: Thus says the Lord God: O city that sheds blood in her midst, so that her time may come, and that makes inventions against herself, to defile herself! **read ›**

88 **Ezekiel 34:11** For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will seek out my sheep and visit them. **read ›**

89 **Daniel 3:9** “O king, live forever! **read ›**

90 **Daniel 11:18** And he shall turn his face to the islands and capture many, and he shall make rulers cease from their taunts; but his own taunts shall return upon him. **read ›**

91 **Daniel 11:21** One shall stand in his place who was despised, and they did not give him the glory of the kingdom; and he shall come in prosperity and seize the kingdom by intrigues, **read ›**

92 **Hosea 12:14** Ephraim provoked wrath and provoked anger, and his blood shall be poured out upon him, and the Lord will repay him for his taunts. (Septuagint Hosea 12:15 (Hosea 12:14 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

93 **Amos 3:14** For in the day when I avenge the ungodly deeds of Israel upon him, I will also take vengeance on the altars of Bethel; and the horns of the altar shall be broken off, and they shall fall to the ground. **read ›**

94 **Obadiah 1:1** The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord God to Idumea: I have heard a report from the Lord, and he has sent out a summons to siege among the nations: “Arise, and let us rise up against her to war.” **read ›**

95 **Malachi 1:4** For one will say, “Idumea has been overthrown, but let us return and rebuild the desolate places.” Thus says the Lord Almighty: They will build, but I will throw down; and they will be called “Borders of iniquity,” and “A people against whom the Lord has lined up for battle forever.” **read ›**

96 **Malachi 2:4** And you will know that I have sent this commandment to you, that my covenant might be with the Levites, says the Lord Almighty. **read ›**

97 **1 Esdras 1:23** And the works of Josiah were upright before his Lord, with a heart full of godliness. **read ›**

98 **1 Esdras 4:39** And with it there is no partiality or acceptance of bribes; but it does what is just, apart from all that is unrighteous and wicked; and all approve its works, **read ›**

99 **1 Esdras 8:94** as has been decided by you and by all who obey the law of the Lord. **read ›**

100 **Tobit 12:8** Prayer is good with fasting and alms and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with unrighteousness. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold. **read ›**

101 **Tobit 12:9** For alms delivers from death, and it will purge away every sin. Those who do acts of alms and righteous deeds will be filled with life; **read ›**

102 **Wisdom of Solomon 3:14** And blessed is the eunuch who has done no lawless deed with his hand, nor devised evil things against the Lord; for to him will be given the choice grace of faith, and a more delightful lot in the temple of the Lord. **read ›**

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103 **Wisdom of Solomon 12:19** And through such works you taught your people that the righteous man must love mankind, and you made your sons of good hope, that you give repentance for sins. **read ›**

104 **Wisdom of Solomon 14:7** For blessed is the wood through which righteousness comes. **read ›**

105 **Wisdom of Sirach 1:1** Since many great things have been given to us through the Law and the Prophets and the others who followed after them, for which Israel ought to be praised for its instruction and wisdom; and since not only must those who read become knowledgeable themselves, but lovers of learning must also be able to be of use to those outside, both by speaking and by writing: my grandfather Jesus, having given himself more and more to the reading of the Law and the Prophets and the other books of our fathers, and having gained considerable skill in them, was himself also led to write something pertaining to instruction and wisdom, so that lovers of learning, having become devoted to these things as well, might make still greater progress by living according to the law. You are urged, therefore, to read with goodwill and attention, and to be forgiving wherever, despite our diligent labor in translating, we may seem to fall short in some of the expressions; for what is said in Hebrew does not have the same force when it is brought over into another language. And not only these things, but the Law itself and the prophecies and the rest of the books differ not a little when they are spoken in their own language. For in the thirty-eighth year, in the reign of King Euergetes, having come into Egypt and stayed there some time, I found a copy of no small instruction; and I myself thought it most necessary to apply some diligence and labor to the translation of this book, bringing much watchfulness and skill to it in that space of time, in order to complete the book and publish it also for those living abroad who wish to love learning, preparing their character beforehand to live according to the law. All wisdom is from the Lord, and is with him forever. **read ›**

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

107 **Wisdom of Sirach 11:26** for it is easy before the Lord on the day of death to repay a man according to his ways. **read ›**

108 **Wisdom of Sirach 12:2** Do good to a godly man, and you will find a reward, if not from him, then from the Most High. **read ›**

109 **Wisdom of Sirach 16:12** As great as his mercy, so great also is his rebuke; he judges a man according to his works. **read ›**

110 **Wisdom of Sirach 16:14** He will make room for every act of mercy; each one will find according to his works. **read ›**

111 **Wisdom of Sirach 16:22** Who will declare works of righteousness, or who will endure them? For the covenant is far off. **read ›**

112 **Wisdom of Sirach 16:26** In the judgment of the Lord his works were from the beginning, and from their making he assigned them their portions. **read ›**

113 **Wisdom of Sirach 17:22** A man’s act of mercy is like a signet ring with him, and he will keep a man’s kindness like the apple of the eye. **read ›**

114 **Wisdom of Sirach 17:23** Afterward he will rise up and repay them, and bring their repayment upon their heads. **read ›**

115 **Wisdom of Sirach 18:2** The Lord alone will be justified. **read ›**

116 **Wisdom of Sirach 18:20** Before judgment, examine yourself, and in the hour of visitation you will find atonement. **read ›**

117 **Wisdom of Sirach 19:20** All wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and in all wisdom is the doing of the law. **read ›**

118 **Wisdom of Sirach 32:2** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

119 **Wisdom of Sirach 32:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

120 **Wisdom of Sirach 32:11** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

121 **Wisdom of Sirach 32:19** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

122 **Wisdom of Sirach 39:33** All the works of the Lord are good, and he will supply every need in its hour. **read ›**

123 **Wisdom of Sirach 42:2** of the law of the Most High and of the covenant, and of judgment, to justify the ungodly; **read ›**

124 **Wisdom of Sirach 51:30** Do your work before the time, and in his time he will give you your reward. **read ›**

125 **1 Maccabees 2:48** They rescued the law out of the hand of the nations and out of the hand of the kings, and they did not let the sinner triumph. **read ›**

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126 **1 Maccabees 2:50** And now, my children, be zealous for the law, and give your lives for the covenant of our fathers. **read ›**

127 **1 Maccabees 2:52** Was not Abraham found faithful in trial, and it was counted to him for righteousness? **read ›**

128 **1 Maccabees 14:19** And these were read before the assembly in Jerusalem. **read ›**

129 **2 Maccabees 12:41** So they all blessed the Lord, the righteous Judge, who makes hidden things manifest, **read ›**

130 **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 ›**

131 **2 Maccabees 12:45** And then, looking to the most splendid reward laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness—a holy and godly thought—he therefore made atonement for the dead, that they might be released from their sin. **read ›**

132 **3 Maccabees 3:5** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

133 **3 Maccabees 7:22** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

134 **4 Maccabees 5:17** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

135 **4 Maccabees 5:25** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

136 **4 Maccabees 13:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

137 **4 Maccabees 15:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

138 **1 Enoch 1:7** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

139 **1 Enoch 1:8** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

140 **1 Enoch 27:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

141 **1 Enoch 27:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

142 **1 Enoch 38:1** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

143 **1 Enoch 39:6** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

144 **1 Enoch 41:2** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

145 **1 Enoch 61:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

146 **1 Enoch 63:8** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

147 **1 Enoch 67:10** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

148 **1 Enoch 69:1** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

149 **1 Enoch 91:14** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

150 **1 Enoch 95:5** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

151 **1 Enoch 99:15** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

152 **Matthew 3:8** Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance! **read ›**

153 **Matthew 10:41** He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward. He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward. **read ›**

154 **Matthew 16:27** For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will give to everyone according to his deeds. **read ›**

155 **Matthew 21:32** For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. When you saw it, you did not even repent afterward, that you might believe him. **read ›**

156 **Luke 3:8** Therefore produce fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say among yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father;’ for I tell you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones! **read ›**

157 **John 5:29** and will come out; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment. **read ›**

158 **Acts 3:11** As the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering. **read ›**

159 **Acts 5:23** “We found the prison shut and locked, and the guards standing before the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside!” **read ›**

160 **Acts 13:39** and by him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. **read ›**

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161 **Acts 20:21** testifying to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faithfulness toward our Lord Jesus. **read ›**

162 **Acts 26:20** but declared first to them of Damascus, at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. **read ›**

163 **Romans 2:2** We know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. **read ›**

164 **Romans 2:4** Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and patience, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? **read ›**

165 **Romans 2:6** who will repay each one according to his works: **read ›**

166 **Romans 2:10** But glory, honor, and peace go to every man who does good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. **read ›**

167 **Romans 2:13** For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified **read ›**

168 **Romans 2:16** in the day when God will judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ. **read ›**

169 **Romans 3:11** there is none who understands; there is none who seeks God. **read ›**

170 **Romans 3:20** Because by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight; for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. **read ›**

171 **Romans 3:27** Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. **read ›**

172 **Romans 3:28** We maintain therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. **read ›**

173 **Romans 4:2** For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not toward God. **read ›**

174 **Romans 4:4** Now to him who works, the reward is not counted as grace, but as something owed. **read ›**

175 **Romans 4:5** But to him who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness. **read ›**

176 **1 Corinthians 3:8** Now he who plants and he who waters are one, but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. **read ›**

177 **1 Corinthians 3:14** If anyone’s work which he has built upon it remains, he will receive a reward. **read ›**

178 **2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive what is due for the things done through the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. **read ›**

179 **2 Corinthians 7:10** For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, which brings no regret. But the sorrow of the world produces death. **read ›**

180 **Galatians 2:16** yet knowing that a man is not justified by works of the law but through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, even we believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by the faithfulness of Christ and not by works of the law, because no flesh will be justified by works of the law. **read ›**

181 **Galatians 3:10** For as many as are of works of the law are under a curse. For it is written: Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things written in the book of the law, to do them. **read ›**

182 **Galatians 3:11** Now it is evident that no one is justified by the law before God, for the righteous will live by faithfulness. **read ›**

183 **Ephesians 6:8** knowing that whatever good each one does, he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. **read ›**

184 **1 Timothy 5:25** Likewise, good works are evident, and even those that are otherwise cannot remain hidden. **read ›**

185 **James 2:13** For judgment is without mercy to him who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. **read ›**

186 **James 2:17** Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself. **read ›**

187 **James 2:18** But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith by your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. **read ›**

188 **James 2:22** Do you see that faithfulness was working with his works, and by works faithfulness was made perfect? **read ›**

189 **James 2:24** You see then that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. **read ›**

190 **James 2:25** In the same way, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? **read ›**

191 **James 2:26** For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead. **read ›**

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192 **Revelation 20:12** I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works from what was written in the books. **read ›**

193 **Revelation 20:13** The sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. They were judged, each one according to his works. **read ›**

194 **Revelation 22:12** “Behold, I am coming quickly! My reward is with me, to repay to each man according to his work. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *252 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.

Genesis 9:18

Exodus 4:6 · 32:34

Deuteronomy 22:10 · 26:18 · 32:10 · 32:23

1 Kings 11:31 · 18:33

Psalms 18:26 · 19:1

Proverbs 14:8

Ecclesiastes 12:5 · 12:6 · 12:7

Isaiah 5:21 · 40:10

Jeremiah 5:8

Lamentations 3:25

Daniel 6:16 · 7:7 · 7:10 · 7:24

Malachi 3:2 · 4:5

Matthew 3:7 · 3:10 · 4:10 · 5:4 · 5:5 · 5:8 · 5:9 · 5:16 · 5:19 · 5:28 · 5:39 · 5:40 · 5:44 · 6:9 · 6:12 · 6:19 · 6:31 · 6:32 · 7:13 · 7:18 · 7:21 · 7:24 · 7:26 · 9:13 · 9:29 · 10:32 · 10:39 · 11:13 · 11:27 · 12:7 · 12:35 · 12:38 · 15:13 · 16:21 · 16:26 · 18:17 · 19:17 · 20:16 · 20:21 · 21:23 · 24:11 · 25:33 · 25:34 · 25:36 · 25:41

Mark 1:3 · 1:8 · 2:8 · 8:36 · 12:33 · 13:25

Luke 1:35 · 1:38 · 1:52 · 3:2 · 3:4 · 3:9 · 7:1 · 7:11 · 7:16 · 7:20 · 7:21 · 7:25 · 7:26 · 7:28 · 7:36 · 7:37 · 10:21 · 12:20 · 12:22 · 12:30 · 12:33 · 13:32 · 14:11 · 18:10 · 19:8

John 1:3 · 1:14 · 1:17 · 1:21 · 1:24 · 2:13 · 3:5 · 3:36 · 4:4 · 4:14 · 4:20 · 5:14 · 5:28 · 6:27 · 6:40 · 6:63 · 7:17 · 8:19 · 8:39 · 8:41 · 8:44 · 8:48 · 12:25 · 12:47 · 17:23 · 17:24 · 17:25 · 19:34 · 20:28

Acts 13:15 · 13:48 · 16:3 · 20:24 · 21:23 · 24:15

Romans 1:3 · 1:16 · 1:17 · 1:18 · 2:11 · 2:12 · 2:21 · 2:24 · 2:28 · 2:29 · 3:19 · 3:21 · 4:3 · 4:11 · 5:1 · 5:20 · 5:21 · 7:4 · 7:7 · 7:8 · 7:12 · 7:13 · 7:14 · 8:5 · 8:17 · 8:18 · 9:5 · 9:15 · 12:17 · 13:2 · 14:10 · 14:12 · 16:17 · 16:18

1 Corinthians 2:9 · 3:12 · 3:13 · 4:13 · 9:20 · 9:22 · 10:4 · 10:24 · 12:13 · 13:8 · 13:11 · 14:20 · 15:32 · 15:50 · 15:52 · 15:53 · 15:54 · 15:58 · 16:13

2 Corinthians 5:1 · 5:2 · 5:4 · 5:5 · 5:6 · 5:8 · 5:17 · 7:1 · 8:12 · 8:21 · 11:2 · 11:13 · 11:14 · 12:7 · 12:9 · 13:1 · 13:2 · 13:10

Galatians 1:1 · 1:6 · 2:1 · 2:2 · 2:3 · 2:4 · 2:9 · 2:10 · 2:12 · 2:18 · 2:19 · 3:6 · 3:7 · 3:13 · 3:22 · 3:23 · 3:26 · 3:28 · 4:7 · 6:10

Ephesians 5:8

Philippians 1:4 · 2:3 · 3:18

Colossians 3:5

1 Timothy 1:18 · 3:16 · 4:16 · 6:20

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2 Timothy 4:6
Hebrews 6:7 · 9:14 · 10:25 · 10:39 · 11:16 · 11:17
James 2:23 · 5:14 · 5:15
1 Peter 2:21 · 3:18
1 John 3:15 · 4:4 · 5:7
Jude 1:11

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 good works?” on May 22, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

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