

Bible Passages Often Taken Out of Context



Perilous P's: 15 examples each from Prophecy, Psalms, Proverbs, Phrases, Promises, Parables

Prophecy

These examples show how prophetic passages are often flattened into slogans, timelines, or prooftexts instead of being read within covenant history, judgment, and redemption.

1. Isaiah 7:14

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| Original word(s) | <i>'Almah' (young woman); 'Immanuel' (God with us)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as if Isaiah only spoke about a distant virgin-birth prediction with no relevance to Ahaz. |
| Historical context | Isaiah first addressed King Ahaz during the Syro-Ephraimite crisis in the 8th century BC. The sign had immediate significance for Judah, while Matthew later shows its fuller Messianic realization in Jesus. |
| Theological context | Biblical prophecy often has an immediate horizon and a fuller fulfillment. Reading only one layer flattens the text. |

2. Isaiah 9:6–7

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| Original word(s) | <i>Pele' yo'etz, El gibbor, Sar shalom</i> |
| Often misused as | Quoted only as a Christmas slogan detached from Isaiah's judgment-and-restoration context. |
| Historical context | Isaiah announced hope for David's line after national darkness and Assyrian pressure. The child oracle is royal, covenantal, and bound to God's zeal for Zion. |
| Theological context | The passage is about the Davidic king and God's kingdom, not merely sentimental seasonal inspiration. |

3. Isaiah 53

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>'Ebed' (servant); 'nasa' (to bear); 'chalal' (pierced)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used either only for physical healing or only as a generic example of suffering. |
| Historical context | The servant song emerges from Isaiah's exilic-restoration framework and climaxes in substitutionary suffering. The New Testament applies it centrally to Christ's atoning death. |
| Theological context | The core issue is redemptive suffering for sin; healing language is tied to reconciliation and restoration under God's saving work. |



4. Jeremiah 31:31–34

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Berit chadashah (new covenant); lev (heart)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to say God discarded the Old Testament entirely or that obedience no longer matters. |
| Historical context | Jeremiah spoke to exiles and coming exiles, promising covenant renewal to Israel and Judah after covenant failure. |
| Theological context | The new covenant is not lawlessness; it is God’s law internalized and sins truly forgiven, fulfilled in Christ. |

5. Ezekiel 37:1–14

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Ruach (spirit/breath/wind)</i> |
| Often misused as | Preached only as a motivational message about reviving personal dreams. |
| Historical context | Ezekiel addressed a people in exile who said their hope was cut off. The dry bones first signify national restoration of Israel by God’s Spirit. |
| Theological context | Personal renewal can be analogically drawn, but the primary meaning is corporate resurrection-like restoration of God’s people. |

6. Daniel 9:24–27

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Mashiach (anointed one); shavu‘im (weeks)</i> |
| Often misused as | Handled as a code chart with no regard for Daniel’s prayer about exile, sin, and Jerusalem. |
| Historical context | The prophecy answers Daniel’s confession and concern over Jeremiah’s seventy years, focusing on transgression, atonement, and the holy city. |
| Theological context | Any timeline reading must remain subordinate to the text’s theological center: God deals with sin and establishes righteousness. |

7. Joel 2:28–32

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Shaphak (pour out); ruach (Spirit)</i> |
| Often misused as | Treated as a generic revival slogan without its judgment-restoration setting. |
| Historical context | Joel links locust judgment, repentance, restoration, and the outpouring of God’s Spirit. Peter applies it at Pentecost as inaugurated fulfillment. |
| Theological context | The promise marks covenant renewal and the widening of Spirit-gifted witness, not merely emotional intensity. |



8. Amos 9:11–12

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Sukkat David (booth of David)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a modern nation-state proof-text without considering apostolic interpretation. |
| Historical context | Amos ends with restoration after severe judgment. Acts 15 cites it to explain Gentile inclusion through the restored Davidic rule of Christ. |
| Theological context | The prophecy centers on messianic kingdom restoration that gathers the nations under God's name. |

9. Micah 5:2

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Moshal (ruler); miqqedem (from of old)</i> |
| Often misused as | Quoted only as a Bethlehem Christmas detail. |
| Historical context | Micah ministered amid covenant lawsuit and coming judgment, yet promised a Davidic shepherd-ruler from little Bethlehem. |
| Theological context | The verse signals God's surprising preservation of the Davidic promise through humble origins and royal shepherding. |

10. Zechariah 9:9

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Melek (king); 'ani (humble/afflicted)</i> |
| Often misused as | Reduced to a Palm Sunday scene-piece without the chapter's warfare and peace context. |
| Historical context | Post-exilic Judah awaited full restoration. Zechariah contrasts violent kingship with a humble king who brings peace to the nations. |
| Theological context | Jesus fulfills this as a different kind of king whose reign is righteous, humble, and global. |

11. Zechariah 12:10

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Daqar (pierce); chen (grace/favor)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used with no attention to repentance and mourning in the surrounding oracle. |
| Historical context | Zechariah foresaw a future work of grace in Jerusalem producing deep mourning over the pierced one. |
| Theological context | The passage joins divine grace, repentance, and recognition of the rejected-yet-central figure fulfilled in Christ. |



12. Malachi 4:5–6

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Shub (turn/restore)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to predict literal Elijah alone, detached from covenant reform. |
| Historical context | Malachi confronted post-exilic spiritual apathy. The Elijah promise points to prophetic ministry that turns hearts before the day of the Lord; Jesus connects it to John the Baptist. |
| Theological context | The emphasis is covenant repentance and readiness for God’s visitation. |

13. Haggai 2:6–9

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Kabod (glory); ra’ash (shake)</i> |
| Often misused as | Applied as a promise that every church building will become more impressive than the last. |
| Historical context | Haggai encouraged returned exiles discouraged by the modest second temple. God promised future glory and cosmic shaking. |
| Theological context | The text speaks of God’s redemptive presence and future kingdom realities, not guaranteed architectural grandeur. |

14. Hosea 11:1

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Beni (my son); qara’ (call)</i> |
| Often misused as | Read as though Hosea gave only a direct Messianic prediction. |
| Historical context | In Hosea, the line plainly refers to Israel’s exodus. Matthew cites it typologically to show Jesus recapitulates Israel’s story. |
| Theological context | Biblical fulfillment can be typological: Jesus is the true Son who succeeds where Israel failed. |

15. Matthew 24:34

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Genea (generation)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a date-setting tool with little regard for apocalyptic discourse conventions. |
| Historical context | Jesus addresses the destruction of the temple, covenant judgment, and the certainty of his words in a complex prophetic discourse. |
| Theological context | The verse should be handled with care inside the whole discourse; it is not a license for repeated failed end-times predictions. |



Psalms

These examples from Israel's songbook are often quoted devotionally but detached from lament, temple worship, kingship, exile, or covenant trust.

1. Psalm 23:4

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Tsalmavet (deep darkness/shadow of death); shvz/miš'enet (rod/staff)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a promise that believers will avoid all danger. |
| Historical context | David speaks as one who knows real threat yet trusts God's shepherding presence through it. |
| Theological context | The psalm promises God's presence in the valley, not exemption from valleys. |

2. Psalm 37:4

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>'Anag (delight oneself)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used like a blank check for any desire a person already has. |
| Historical context | Psalm 37 contrasts the temporary prosperity of the wicked with the settled inheritance of the righteous. |
| Theological context | Delighting in the Lord reshapes desire; the promise concerns desires aligned with covenant trust. |

3. Psalm 46:10

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Raphah (be still/cease/let go)</i> |
| Often misused as | Quoted as a private relaxation verse only. |
| Historical context | The psalm depicts nations raging and God ending war. 'Be still' is addressed in a context of divine supremacy over the nations. |
| Theological context | It is first a call to recognize God's sovereign rule, not merely an invitation to inner calm. |

4. Psalm 51:10

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Lev tahor (clean heart); chadash (renew)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as if David asks for better self-esteem or a fresh start without repentance. |
| Historical context | David writes after his sin involving Bathsheba and Uriah, confessing guilt before God. |
| Theological context | The verse is a plea for inner cleansing after grievous sin; it belongs to repentance, not vague self-improvement. |



5. Psalm 82:6

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Elohim; bene 'elyon (sons of the Most High)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to teach humans are divine beings by nature. |
| Historical context | Psalm 82 rebukes unjust rulers/judges who were called 'gods' in a representative sense yet will die like men. |
| Theological context | The point is accountability of earthly authorities under the true God, not human deification. |

6. Psalm 91:11–12

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Mal'akim (angels); shamar (guard)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to guarantee believers will never suffer physical harm. |
| Historical context | The psalm celebrates God as refuge amid danger, but even Satan misquotes it in Jesus' temptation narrative. |
| Theological context | Trust in God is not license for presumption. The psalm teaches refuge, not reckless invulnerability. |

7. Psalm 127:1

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Banah (build); shamar (watch/guard)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to imply human planning is worthless. |
| Historical context | A wisdom psalm of Solomon teaches dependence on the Lord in ordinary labor, home, and city life. |
| Theological context | Human effort is necessary but not ultimate; success is vain when severed from God's blessing. |

8. Psalm 139:14

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Yare' (fearfully); pala' (wonderfully)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used only as a self-esteem slogan detached from God's intimate knowledge and moral claim. |
| Historical context | David marvels that God knows and formed him completely. |
| Theological context | The verse affirms God's creative ownership and sanctity of life more than modern therapeutic affirmation. |

9. Psalm 118:24

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Gyl/samach (rejoice/be glad)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as though every day will feel pleasant because God made it. |
| Historical context | This psalm celebrates God's saving deliverance and likely a liturgical day of victory. |
| Theological context | Rejoicing is rooted in God's redemptive act, not denial of grief or pain. |



10. Psalm 34:8

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Ta'amu (taste); chasah (take refuge)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a vague invitation to spiritual experimentation. |
| Historical context | David wrote after deliverance from danger, urging the faithful to experience the goodness of the Lord in trusting refuge. |
| Theological context | The verse invites covenant trust grounded in lived deliverance. |

11. Psalm 22:1

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>'Azavtani (have you forsaken me)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to say the Father permanently abandoned the Son or that despair is the whole message. |
| Historical context | David's lament moves from anguish to vindication. Jesus cites it from the cross, invoking the whole psalm. |
| Theological context | The psalm legitimizes lament while ultimately moving toward vindication and worldwide praise. |

12. Psalm 51:17

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Nishbar (broken); dakkah (crushed)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to glorify shame as though God delights in emotional ruin itself. |
| Historical context | David contrasts genuine repentance with mere ritual sacrifice. |
| Theological context | God welcomes contrition, not self-destruction; the verse prioritizes sincere repentance over empty ceremony. |

13. Psalm 2:7

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Ben (son); yalad (beget)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as if God adopted Jesus at some later point. |
| Historical context | A royal enthronement psalm about the Davidic king, later read christologically in the New Testament. |
| Theological context | The language is covenantal and royal, reaching its fullest meaning in the Messiah's kingship. |

14. Psalm 137:9

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>'Ashre (blessed/happy)</i> |
| Often misused as | Quoted carelessly without noting it is imprecatory poetry from exile trauma. |
| Historical context | Exiles in Babylon voice grief and longing for justice after horrific violence. |
| Theological context | The verse records raw lament and desire for justice; it is not a standing |



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| | command for personal vengeance. |
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15. Psalm 14:1

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Nabal (fool)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to mock unbelievers merely as intellectually deficient. |
| Historical context | In Hebrew wisdom, the ‘fool’ is morally corrupt and covenantally rebellious, not simply uninformed. |
| Theological context | The psalm critiques practical atheism expressed in corruption and injustice. |

Proverbs

These sayings are wisdom principles, not unconditional guarantees. Context matters because proverbs train discernment rather than replace it.

1. Proverbs 3:5–6

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Batach (trust); yashar (make straight)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as if wise believers never need counsel or planning. |
| Historical context | The father instructs the son in covenant wisdom that submits every path to the Lord. |
| Theological context | Trust in the Lord does not eliminate prudence; it relocates ultimate confidence. |

2. Proverbs 22:6

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Chanak (train); na‘ar (child)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as an absolute guarantee that godly parenting always prevents later rebellion. |
| Historical context | Proverbs are wisdom sayings—general truths about how life ordinarily works, not unconditional formulas. |
| Theological context | The verse teaches formative discipleship, yet children remain moral agents before God. |

3. Proverbs 29:18

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Chazon (vision/revelation); para‘ (cast off restraint)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to mean organizations need a strategic vision statement. |
| Historical context | The proverb is about the necessity of divine revelation/law for covenant order. |
| Theological context | Without God’s revealed word people run wild; the point is not corporate branding. |



4. Proverbs 26:4–5

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Kesil (fool)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to claim Scripture contradicts itself. |
| Historical context | Two adjacent proverbs teach situational wisdom: sometimes answering a fool is unwise; sometimes necessary. |
| Theological context | Wisdom requires discernment about timing and manner, not rigid one-size-fits-all application. |

5. Proverbs 4:23

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Leb (heart); natsar (guard)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used only for emotional boundaries. |
| Historical context | In Hebrew thought the heart is the control center of thought, will, and desire. |
| Theological context | Guarding the heart means moral-spiritual vigilance over the whole inner life. |

6. Proverbs 10:22

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Barak (bless); 'etseb (sorrow/toil)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to promise that God's blessings always exclude hardship. |
| Historical context | The proverb contrasts God-given enrichment with anxious, crooked striving. |
| Theological context | God's blessing is good and pure, though faithful people may still endure suffering in a fallen world. |

7. Proverbs 13:24

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Shebet (rod); musar (discipline)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to justify harsh or abusive parenting. |
| Historical context | Proverbs commends loving discipline in a family setting, not uncontrolled anger. |
| Theological context | Biblical discipline is measured, formative, and loving; abuse violates the wisdom ethic. |

8. Proverbs 16:3

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| Original word(s) | <i>Galal (commit/roll onto)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a guarantee every plan will succeed if prayed over. |
| Historical context | The proverb calls for entrusting one's works to the Lord in humble dependence. |
| Theological context | Established plans are those brought into alignment with God's will, not |



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| | sanctified self-will. |
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9. Proverbs 18:21

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| Original word(s) | <i>Mavet/chayyim (death/life); yad lashon (power of the tongue)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as if words create reality by metaphysical force. |
| Historical context | The proverb teaches the immense moral and relational power of speech. |
| Theological context | Words do have consequences, but the verse is about ethical power, not magical manifestation. |

10. Proverbs 21:1

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Lev-melek (king's heart); palge-mayim (channels of water)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to excuse passivity in the face of corrupt rulers. |
| Historical context | The proverb comforts God's people that rulers are not beyond divine providence. |
| Theological context | God's sovereignty over kings does not cancel human responsibility for justice and prayer. |

11. Proverbs 22:7

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Laveh (borrower); 'ebed (slave)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to condemn all debt in every case as sin. |
| Historical context | The saying observes the vulnerability created by indebtedness in the ancient world. |
| Theological context | It is a prudential warning about bondage, not an automatic moral verdict on every loan. |

12. Proverbs 27:17

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Chadad (sharpen)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to defend abrasive criticism for its own sake. |
| Historical context | The proverb praises mutual improvement within covenant friendship. |
| Theological context | Edifying friction differs from cruelty; real sharpening aims at wisdom and virtue. |

13. Proverbs 31:6–7

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|---------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Yayin/shekar (wine/strong drink)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to endorse escapist intoxication. |
| Historical context | The line belongs to counsel about rulers avoiding impaired judgment and mentions the desperate condition of the perishing. |



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| Theological context | Descriptive advice in a specific setting should not override broader biblical warnings about drunkenness. |
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14. Proverbs 14:12

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| Original word(s) | <i>Yashar (seems right); mavet (death)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to dismiss conscience altogether. |
| Historical context | The proverb warns against autonomous human judgment detached from wisdom. |
| Theological context | Conscience must be instructed by God's truth; sincerity alone is insufficient. |

15. Proverbs 11:24

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Pazar (scatter/give generously)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a prosperity formula guaranteeing immediate financial return. |
| Historical context | The proverb contrasts generosity with stinginess in the moral order God has woven into life. |
| Theological context | Generosity is commended because it reflects wisdom and trust, not because it mechanizes wealth. |

Phrases

These are well-known biblical phrases—or in one case a popular phrase wrongly assumed to be biblical—that are frequently repeated with little regard for literary context.

1. “Judge not, that you be not judged” (Matthew 7:1)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Krino (judge)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to forbid all moral evaluation. |
| Historical context | Jesus condemns hypocritical, self-righteous judgment in the Sermon on the Mount, not careful discernment. |
| Theological context | The same chapter calls for recognizing false prophets by their fruit; the issue is the manner and standard of judgment. |

2. “Where two or three are gathered...” (Matthew 18:20)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Synagmenoi (gathered); onoma (name)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as though Jesus is absent unless a small group meets. |
| Historical context | The context is church discipline and agreement in prayer under Christ's authority. |
| Theological context | Christ is always with his people; this verse specifically assures the church in disciplined communal decisions. |



3. “Touch not my anointed” (Psalm 105:15 / 1 Chronicles 16:22)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Mashiach (anointed)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to shield leaders from accountability. |
| Historical context | The phrase recalls God’s protection of patriarchs, not immunity for modern ministers or rulers from rebuke. |
| Theological context | Anointing is never a cloak for unchallengeable authority. |

4. “Money is the root of all evil” (1 Timothy 6:10)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Philargyria (love of money)</i> |
| Often misused as | Misquoted to condemn money itself. |
| Historical context | Paul warns against greed in a letter about contentment and godliness. |
| Theological context | Money is not the root; the love of money is a root of many evils. |

5. “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:26)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Pistis (faith); erga (works)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to teach salvation is earned by works. |
| Historical context | James addresses a claim to faith that lacks evidence, while Paul opposes works as the basis of justification. |
| Theological context | True faith is living and fruitful; works demonstrate faith rather than replace grace. |

6. “I can do all things through Christ” (Philippians 4:13)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Ischyō (be strong/have strength)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a slogan for limitless achievement. |
| Historical context | Paul speaks about contentment in abundance and want while imprisoned. |
| Theological context | Christ strengthens believers to endure faithful obedience in every circumstance, not to guarantee personal triumph. |

7. “Ask, and it will be given to you” (Matthew 7:7)

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Aiteo (ask); zeteo (seek)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a blank promise for any request whatsoever. |
| Historical context | Jesus teaches trusting prayer to the Father within kingdom discipleship. |
| Theological context | Prayer promises are framed by God’s goodness, wisdom, and the larger call to seek his kingdom. |



8. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Da‘at (knowledge)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used only to promote data, study, or intellectualism. |
| Historical context | Hosea indicts priests and people for covenant unfaithfulness and rejection of the knowledge of God. |
| Theological context | Biblical knowledge is relational and covenantal, not mere information. |

9. “An eye for an eye” (Exodus 21:24; Matthew 5:38)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Tachat (for/in place of)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to justify personal revenge. |
| Historical context | The lex talionis limited judicial punishment in civil law so retribution would be proportional. |
| Theological context | Jesus rejects personal retaliation; the phrase was never a warrant for private vengeance. |

10. “The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:6)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Gramma (letter); pneuma (Spirit)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to oppose careful study or written doctrine. |
| Historical context | Paul contrasts the old covenant written code with the Spirit-empowered new covenant ministry. |
| Theological context | The issue is covenant administration, not anti-intellectualism. |

11. “Work out your own salvation...” (Philippians 2:12)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Katergazesthe (work out)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to teach self-salvation. |
| Historical context | Paul speaks to a church already in Christ and immediately adds that God is at work in them. |
| Theological context | Believers actively live out what God graciously works in. |

12. “Be in the world, not of the world” (cf. John 17:14–18)

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| Original word(s) | <i>Kosmos (world)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a slogan for total cultural withdrawal. |
| Historical context | Jesus prays not for removal from the world but for sanctified mission within it. |
| Theological context | Christian distinctness is missional holiness, not total disengagement. |



13. “God knows my heart” (cf. 1 Samuel 16:7; Luke 16:15)

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| Original word(s) | <i>Levav/heart; kardia</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to excuse outward disobedience. |
| Historical context | Scripture’s point is that God sees beyond appearances and therefore exposes hypocrisy. |
| Theological context | God’s heart-knowledge comforts sincerity but also intensifies accountability. |

14. “Do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Ephesians 4:26)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Parorgismos (anger/exasperation)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a rigid rule that every conflict must be fully resolved before bedtime. |
| Historical context | Paul warns against giving the devil opportunity through unresolved, sinful anger in community life. |
| Theological context | The verse presses urgency in reconciliation, not a wooden clock-based law. |

15. “Cleanliness is next to godliness” (not in the Bible)

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>N/A</i> |
| Often misused as | Often quoted as if biblical. |
| Historical context | The phrase is a later proverb, not Scripture. |
| Theological context | Its popularity shows how easily familiar sayings can be mistaken for biblical teaching. |

Promises

These passages do contain real promises, but they are often universalized, individualized, or turned into formulas apart from their covenant and redemptive context.

1. Jeremiah 29:11

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Machashavot shalom (plans of peace/welfare)</i> |
| Often misused as | Applied as a personal success guarantee for any believer’s immediate future. |
| Historical context | Jeremiah writes to exiles in Babylon facing a long seventy-year judgment before restoration. |
| Theological context | The promise reveals God’s covenant faithfulness to his people in exile; application today should respect that redemptive-historical setting. |



2. Romans 8:28

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|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Synergei (works together); agathon (good)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to say every event is itself good. |
| Historical context | Paul speaks in the context of suffering, groaning creation, and future glory for those in Christ. |
| Theological context | God weaves all things toward believers' ultimate conformity to Christ, not necessarily present comfort. |

3. 2 Chronicles 7:14

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| Original word(s) | <i>Kana' (humble); rapha' (heal)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a direct national promise to any modern country. |
| Historical context | God spoke to Solomon about the temple and covenant life in Israel. |
| Theological context | The principle of repentance is enduring, but the verse is not a simple one-to-one covenant promise to modern states. |

4. Isaiah 40:31

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Qavah (wait/hope); chalaph (renew)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to promise instant energy or escape from weakness. |
| Historical context | Isaiah comforts exiles with the greatness of God over idols and rulers. |
| Theological context | Strength is renewed through hopeful dependence on God; the imagery points to sustained endurance. |

5. John 14:13–14

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Aiteo (ask); en to onomati mou (in my name)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to imply attaching 'in Jesus' name' guarantees any request. |
| Historical context | Jesus prepares the disciples for his departure and mission. |
| Theological context | Asking in Jesus' name means asking in union with his character, mission, and will. |

6. 1 John 1:9

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Homologeo (confess); aphiemi (forgive)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as though confession is a mechanical reset without repentance. |
| Historical context | John writes to preserve fellowship, truthfulness, and walking in the light. |
| Theological context | The promise is for honest confession rooted in God's faithful character, not manipulative ritual. |



7. Psalm 84:11

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Tov (good); mana' (withhold)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to claim believers will receive every desired thing now. |
| Historical context | The psalm celebrates pilgrimage and life in God's presence. |
| Theological context | God withholds no truly good thing from the upright, but he defines the good according to wisdom. |

8. Matthew 11:28–30

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Anapausis (rest); zygos (yoke)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as if Jesus promises a trouble-free life. |
| Historical context | Jesus invites the weary in contrast to crushing burdens imposed by legalism and unbelief. |
| Theological context | His rest is reconciliation and discipleship under his gentle rule, not freedom from responsibility. |

9. James 1:5

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Sophia (wisdom); haplos (generously)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a promise that every request for wisdom yields immediate certainty. |
| Historical context | James addresses trials that require steadfastness and discernment. |
| Theological context | God truly gives wisdom, yet often through tested maturity, Scripture, counsel, and persevering faith. |

10. Philippians 1:6

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Epitelesei (bring to completion)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to promise success in every project one starts. |
| Historical context | Paul refers to God's sanctifying work in the Philippian believers. |
| Theological context | The promise concerns God's completion of redemptive work in his people until the day of Christ. |

11. Hebrews 13:5

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Ou mē se anō (I will never leave you)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to deny seasons where God feels hidden or to promise visible prosperity. |
| Historical context | Hebrews exhorts a pressured church to contentment and courage. |
| Theological context | God's abiding presence stabilizes believers amid hardship; the promise does not erase felt struggle. |



12. 1 Corinthians 10:13

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Peirasmos (temptation/trial); ekbasis (way out)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used to say God never gives more than you can handle in life generally. |
| Historical context | Paul specifically addresses temptation in a church tempted by idolatry. |
| Theological context | God limits temptation and provides obedience-paths; the verse is not a universal statement about all suffering. |

13. Psalm 91:14–15

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Chashaq (hold fast/love); 'anah (answer)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a guarantee of deliverance from every hardship. |
| Historical context | The psalm speaks of refuge for the one who clings to God. |
| Theological context | God promises presence, answer, honor, and ultimate salvation, but the text also says, 'I will be with him in trouble.' |

14. Matthew 6:33

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>Zeteite (seek); prostethēsetai (will be added)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a guarantee of wealth if one is spiritual enough. |
| Historical context | Jesus teaches against anxious pursuit of food and clothing in the Sermon on the Mount. |
| Theological context | The promise is that the Father cares for kingdom-seeking disciples; it is about trustful provision, not luxury. |

15. Deuteronomy 31:6

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | <i>Chazaq (be strong); 'azab (forsake)</i> |
| Often misused as | Used as a generic bravery mantra detached from covenant mission. |
| Historical context | Moses speaks to Israel as they prepare to enter the land under Joshua. |
| Theological context | The promise is grounded in God's covenant presence in assigned obedience; its application today should preserve that covenantal pattern. |

Parables

These passages do contain real promises, but they are often universalized, individualized, or turned into formulas apart from their covenant and redemptive context

1. Luke 10:25–37 The Good Samaritan

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | <i>'Neighbor' (plēsion)</i> |
| Often misused as | Just be nice to everyone. |
| Historical context | Jews and Samaritans were hostile enemies. |



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| Theological context | Love transcends boundaries; mercy defines true obedience. Redefines 'neighbor' as anyone in need, breaking ethnic/religious bias.. |
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2. Luke 15:11–32 The Prodigal Son

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | 'Lost' (<i>apollumi</i>) |
| Often misused as | Only about reckless living and forgiveness. |
| Historical context | Addressed Pharisees criticizing Jesus. |
| Theological context | God's grace restores; self-righteousness blinds. rebukes the self-righteous; highlights God's grace vs pride. |

3. Matthew 25:14–30 The Talents

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | 'Talent' (<i>talanton = weight/money</i>) |
| Often misused as | Use your abilities for success. |
| Historical context | : Stewardship culture in Roman world. |
| Theological context | Faithfulness matters more than results. |

4. Matthew 20:1–16 The Workers in the Vineyard

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | 'Grace' (<i>charis</i> concept) |
| Often misused as | Life is unfair. |
| Historical context | Day laborers depended on daily wages. |
| Theological context | God's generosity overrides human fairness. God's grace is not earned. |

5. Luke 12:13–21 The Rich Fool

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Original word(s) | 'Soul' (<i>psychē</i>) |
| Often misused as | Wealth is bad. |
| Historical context | Agrarian wealth accumulation. |
| Theological context | Eternal priorities > temporary gain |

6. Matthew 13:1–23 The Sower

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | 'Word' (<i>logos</i>) |
| Often misused as | Evangelism strategy |
| Historical context | Farming imagery familiar to audience |
| Theological context | Heart condition determines fruitfulness. Focus on the heart |



7. Matthew 25:1–13 The Ten Virgins

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Original word(s) | 'Watch' (<i>grēgoreō</i>) |
| Often misused as | General preparedness or legalism |
| Historical context | Jewish wedding customs. |
| Theological context | Spiritual readiness is essential. |

8. Matthew 13:31–32 The Mustard Seed

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | 'Kingdom' (<i>basileia</i>) |
| Often misused as | Personal growth. |
| Historical context | Mustard seed known for rapid spread. |
| Theological context | God's kingdom grows unexpectedly. Many will find refuge in it. |

9. Matthew 13:33 The Leaven

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | 'Leaven' (<i>zymē</i>) |
| Often misused as | Always positive growth. |
| Historical context | Often symbolized corruption. |
| Theological context | Small influence spreads widely. Can represent hidden influence or corruption. |

10. Matthew 18:21–35 The Unforgiving Servant

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | 'Forgive' (<i>aphiēmi</i>) |
| Often misused as | Used as a generic bravery mantra detached from covenant mission. |
| Historical context | Debt slavery common. |
| Theological context | Forgiveness flows from understanding grace. Received mercy must be extended. |

11. Luke 15:1–7 The Lost Sheep

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | 'Repent' (<i>metanoēō</i>) |
| Often misused as | One matters more. |
| Historical context | Shepherd imagery common. |
| Theological context | God pursues the lost. God seeks the repentant. |

12. Luke 18:9–14 The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

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|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Original word(s) | 'Justified' (<i>dikaioō</i>) |
| Often misused as | Don't be arrogant. |



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| Historical context | Tax collectors seen as traitors |
| Theological context | Humility leads to justification. |

13. The Wedding Feast **The Wedding Feast**

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|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | 'Called' (<i>klētos</i>) |
| Often misused as | Everyone is accepted. |
| Historical context | Royal banquets signified honor. |
| Theological context | Invitation requires response. Must meet God's requirements not our own |

14. Matthew 21:33–46 **The Wicked Tenants**

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Original word(s) | 'Cornerstone' (<i>kephalē gōnias</i>) |
| Often misused as | Bad leaders. |
| Historical context | Vineyard imagery from Isaiah 5. |
| Theological context | Rejection of God's messengers. |

15. Matthew 5:14–16 **The Lamp Under a Basket**

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Original word(s) | 'Light' (<i>phōs</i>) |
| Often misused as | Show off deeds. |
| Historical context | Oil lamps in homes. |
| Theological context | Live visibly for God's glory. Glorify God, not self. |