



In this study we look at what is meant in the New Testament by the Greek verb that is translated into English by: **to believe**.

Word study.

To believe is the translation of the Greek verb '**pisteuo**'.

→ According to the OLB '**pisteuo**' is derived from the noun '**pistis**'.

According to the Greek/Dutch dictionary '**pisteuo**' is translated as:

- to trust
- to believe, to accept
- to put trust in
- to be convinced
- to obey

A few Bible texts:

'**Pisteuo**' appears in 220 Bible texts, of which 86 are found in the Gospel according to John.

- *Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you **believed (pisteuo)** it would." And his servant was healed at that moment. (Matthew 8:13)*
- *When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you **believe (pisteuo)** that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied. (Matthew 9:28)*
- *If you **believe (pisteuo)**, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." (Matthew 21:22)*
- *"If you can' (+ not translated: **pisteuo - believe**)?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who **believes (pisteuo)** ." (Mark 9:23)*
- *Blessed is she who has **believed (pisteuo)**, that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" (Luke 1:45)*
- *So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will **trust (pisteuo)** you with true riches? (Luke 16:11)*
- *But Jesus would not **entrust (pisteuo)** himself to them, for he knew all people. (John 2:24)*
- *Whoever **believes (pisteuo)** in him is not condemned, but whoever does not **believe (pisteuo)** stands condemned already because they **has not believed (pisteuo)** in the name of God's one and only Son. (John 3:18)*
- *Whoever **believes (pisteuo)** in the Son has eternal life, ... (John 3:36)*
- *"If anyone hears my words (rhema) but does not **keep (pisteuo)** them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. (John 12:47)*
- *They replied, "**Believe (pisteuo)** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household." (Acts 16:31)*
- *First of all, the Jews have been **entrusted (pisteuo)** with the very words of God. (Romans 3:2)*
- *As Scripture says, "Anyone who **believes (pisteuo)** in him will never be put to shame." (Romans 10:11)*
- *On the contrary, they recognized that I had been **entrusted (pisteuo)** with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised ... (Galatians 2:7)*
- *... that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he **entrusted (pisteuo)** to me. (1 Timothy 1:16)*



- *But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would **believe (pisteuo)** in him and receive eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:16)*
- *... and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching **entrusted (pisteuo)** to me by the command of God our Saviour, ... (Titus 1:3)*
- *This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who **have trusted (pisteuo)** in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. (Titus 3:8)*
- *Dear friends, do not **believe (pisteuo)** every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)*

Interpretation:

'**Pisteuo**' is almost always translated as **(to) believe** in the NIV translation of the Bible. As is to be expected, it is sometimes translated as **(to) trust**, in view of the translation according to the Greek/Dutch dictionary.

In view of the clarity of the word '(to) believe', the verb '(to) believe' in the Bible texts can be replaced by the verb '(to) trust', or '(to) be convinced' or '(to) obey' (in the sense of following through trust).

A few of the above-mentioned Bible texts repeated:

In a more literal translation, in which no account is taken of the difference between trusting Jesus and trusting **in** Jesus.

This is developed in a separate study.¹

- *Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you **trust (pisteuo)** it would." And his servant was healed at that moment. (Matthew 8:13)*
- *When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you **trust (pisteuo)** that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied. (Matthew 9:28)*
- *If you **trust (pisteuo)**, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." (Matthew 21:22)*
(A more literal translation: And everything you ask, **trusting (pisteuo)** in prayer, you will receive.)
- *"If you can **trust (pisteuo)**!" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who **trusts (pisteuo)** ." (Mark 9:23)*
(Jesus does not draw attention to Himself (if you can), but addresses the father.)
- *By **trusting (pisteuo)** in Him, he is not condemned; by not **trusting (pisteuo)** he is already condemned, because he has not **trusted (pisteuo)** in the name of the only Son of God. (John 3:18)*
- *Whoever **trusts (pisteuo)** in the Son has eternal life, ... (John 3:36)*
(A more literal translation: **Trusting (pisteuo)** in the Son you have eternal life, ...)
- *"If anyone hears my words (rhema) but does not **trust (pisteuo)** them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. (John 12:47)*
- *As Scripture says, "Anyone **trusting (pisteuo)** in him will never be put to shame." (Romans 10:11)*

¹ Study: To believe in Jesus Christ.



- *This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those **trusting (pisteuo)** in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. (Titus 3:8)*

To believe/to trust in practice:

If someone is asked: Do you believe in Jesus, he or she will probably answer:

- Yes, I believe in Jesus,
- I believe that He is the Son of God,
- I believe that He was born of the virgin Mary,
- I believe that He died on the cross for my sins,
- I believe that I receive forgiveness of sins through faith in Him,
- I believe that I have eternal life through faith in Him.

Whoever answers thus, knows who Jesus is and what He has done for him.

This changes when the question: “Do you believe in Jesus”, is meant to say:

- **Do you trust** that God has created the world and that He never leaves His children in the lurch.²
- **Do you trust** Him, that He is love and always kind to His children, even if you do not always understand what He does. (1 John 4:16)
- Do you dare to **trust** God, that if you do not work on His day of rest and do not allow others to work for you either, you will nevertheless lack nothing. (Exodus 20:8-11)
- Do you dare to **trust** the promise of God, that if you give tithes of your income back to Him, He will pour out blessing in abundance over you. (Malachi 3:10)
- **Do you trust** Jesus, that He forgives your faults, if you confess them to Him with a repentant heart. (1 John 1:9)
- **Do you trust** Jesus to be the only way.
- Do you dare to **trust** Jesus, that if you place your life under His authority³, you will receive the life and the abundance He has promised, even if He does not appear to satisfy your personal expectations.
- **Do you trust** Jesus to be the truth, and that **trust** in Him, as the Living Word, brings the Bible to life. (John 14:6)
- **Do you trust** Jesus, that you will find rest in Him in life, if you obey His voice. (Matthew 11:28)
- **Do you trust** that if you want to learn from Jesus, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, you will find rest for your soul, because the yoke He lays upon you will be easy and His burden light. (Matthew 11:29-30)
- **Do you trust** the words of Jesus, that if you seek the will of God for your life, He will provide you with everything you need. (Matthew 6:25-34)
- **Do you trust** the words of Jesus that if you trust in Him, you will see the glory of God in your life. (John 11:40)

² Study: Child of God.

³ Study: A different schematic presentation.



- Do you dare to **trust** that Jesus will be with you, all the days of your life, including when you may find yourself in difficult situations and everything seems to be against you. (Matthew 28:20)
- **Do you trust** Jesus to be a Good Shepherd, who takes care of His sheep. (John 10:11)

Conclusion:

Jesus said:

- ***I am the way and the truth and the life.*** (John 14:6)

The way to God, the truth and the life cannot be learned from a book, not even from the Bible.

What life is about is not only the knowledge, but the **relationship with a Person** who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Believing, **trusting**: is life **in a relationship** with that Person, with Jesus Christ.

He said:

- *As for everyone who comes to me and **hears my words and puts them into practice**, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.* (Luke 6:47-48)

According to the Greek translations of 'to believe', believing in Jesus means:

- **trusting** in Jesus completely
- **accepting/being convinced** that He speaks the Truth
- and, based on this conviction, **obeying** Him, i.e. putting what He teaches into practice.

The people asked Jesus:

- *Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"* (John 6:28)

Jesus answered them:

- *"The work of God is this: **to believe/to trust** in the one he has sent."* (John 6:29)

He said:

- *Whoever **believes** in the Son has eternal life, ...* (John 3:36)

Or, better still:

- ***Trusting*** in the Son, you have eternal life ... (John 3:36)

And Paul wrote:

- *"Anyone who **believes** in him will never be put to shame."* (Romans 10:11)

Or, rather:

- *No-one, **trusting** in Him, will ever be put to shame.* (Romans 10:11)



This assumes a life in a **relationship of trust** with Jesus Christ, as He has said:

- *“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will **know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**” (John 8:31-32)*

This is what Jesus meant when He said:

- *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)*

Remark:

In this study the fact that the Greek verb ‘**pisteuo**’ has the meaning of **to trust/to be convinced** is emphasised.

In order not to distract from this, no attention has been given here to the deeper meaning when it refers to:

- *Whoever believes **in** the Son has eternal life, ... (John 3:36)*
- *Whoever believes **in** the Son (trusting **in** the Son), (one) has eternal life ... (John 3:36)*

This is developed in a separate study because the deeper meaning of ‘**believing/trusting in Jesus**’ is exceptionally important for a Christian life.⁴

A number of Bible texts mentioned above will be repeated in this new study - with their full meaning.

⁴ Study: To believe in Jesus Christ.