

What does the Bible say?—Part 3: Wrong Expectation of Humans

Unser Herr lebt 15, 2008
Gotthold Beck

聖書は何と言っていますか—第3回、間違った望み
主は生きておられる 15号、2008年
ゴットホルド・ベック

The Bible consists of the words given through the inspiration of God.

God, the creator of all things in heaven and earth, reveals himself and his intention to us through the Bible. So, all things in the Bible are true. Believers of Jesus in Thessaloniki desired to know the truth and thus discovered the truth. The apostle Paul wrote a letter to such people in Thessaloniki;

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Here is another reason why we constantly give thanks to God: When you received God's word, which you heard from us, you did not accept it as the word of humans but for what it really is—the word of God, which is at work in you who believe. [International Standard Version]

As the Thessalonians believed, the Bible consists of the words of the Lord God and is thus worthy of believing. When we believe in his words, they begin to live in us and affect us. Jesus claimed the truthfulness of his words in the Bible in these verses;

Matthew 5:18

because I tell all of you with certainty that until heaven and earth disappear, not one letter or one stroke of a letter will disappear from the Law until everything has been accomplished.

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.”

Jesus said to the Bible scholars of those days, “The Scripture cannot be disregarded,” (John 10:35) and “The one who belongs to God listens to the words of God. The reason you do not listen is because you do not belong to God.” (John 8:47) Bible scholars attempted to understand, study and discuss the Bible using their intelligence. However, those who use their intelligence in an attempt to understand and study the Bible are assuming that they are more intelligent than the Lord God. The Lord would never reveal himself intimately to such people and thus they would never experience his words working on their lives. This way, they will be separated from the truth. The Bible is beyond our comprehension and we have to either humble ourselves before it or walk away from it. Any attempt to comprehend the Bible

based on your intelligence will never draw you near to it, but rather, will push you away.

Jesus said; “I am the light of the world. The one who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life(John 8:12).” We can either walk toward the light or walk outside of the light. When we walk into the light, we will be regarded as the children of God; we will be saved and blessed. However, we always need to refer to the words in the Bible and find out whether we are truly walking toward the light or in the wrong direction. If you realize that you have the wrong expectations and are heading in the wrong direction, the direction has to be corrected immediately. So, it is very important to identify what kind of expectations is wrong. In this article, I would like to discuss it with some real-life examples.

Wrong Expectation 1:

I will go to heaven because I obey laws and do good deeds.

Regardless of whether people believe it or not, nothing is more important than what the Bible tells us. There should be no other criterion of judgment. Let's see what the Bible says about those who believe that “they will go to heaven because of their righteous lives and good deeds.”

Romans 3:10-12

Not even one person is righteous. No one understands. No one searches for God. All have turned away. They have become completely worthless. No one shows kindness, not even one person!

Galatians 2:16

yet we know that a person is not justified by doing what the Law requires.

The Lord God tells us that what matters is not our “ethical lives or good deeds”, but rather “what is in the spirit of each person.” For those who believe that “they will enter heaven as a reward of their ethical lives and good deeds”, the worst problem is that they are self-satisfied with their “good deeds and good services”, which prevents them from moving further. Moreover, it places them at the risk of judging by themselves what the “ethical lives and good services” are, which overrides the judgment of the Lord. This may not be very straightforward but the lives of those who are satisfied with their own “good deeds and good services” are irrelevant as seen from the eyes of the Lord God. It is simply impossible for humans to do “deeds or services” which are good in an absolute measure. No matter how magnificent a swimming pool looks, water still leaks out even if it has a tiny hole at the bottom. Those who boast about their “good deeds and good services” are very much like this swimming pool. It may look perfect in the

eyes of humans but the Lord God sees a number of holes in them.

Galatians 3:10

Certainly all who depend on the actions of the Law are under a curse. For it is written, “A curse on everyone who does not obey everything that is written in the Book of the Law!”

One German lady was found to be pregnant with a child with severe congenital defects. Many people suggested abortion, telling her that it was the best thing to do. However, she refused, saying, “Abortion is murder. We believe in Jesus and would never do such a thing.” What is believed to be the “most appropriate solution” to worldly problems is not always righteous in the eyes of the Lord. In fact, many things that are done as “a matter of course” are dreadful sins.

James 2:10

For whoever keeps the whole Law but fails in one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

Then, what are the “good deeds” that please the Lord God? It is shown in the words of Jesus in the next few verses.

Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus told him, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is exactly like it: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments.”

Now, what is the ‘good deed’ that Jesus has in mind? One such example can be found in this parable. The Pharisees who appear in this story were the sect of Jewish religious leaders of those days, who believed that “people are recognized as righteous as a result of strictly obeying the laws of God.” On the other hand, tax collectors were reviled and despised by Jews, because they collaborated with the Roman Empire in collecting tax money. While Pharisees were highly esteemed, tax collectors were generally reckoned as sinners. The Pharisees might have appeared noble and righteous outwardly, but Jesus said that “the Lord looks at our heart, not appearance and his thought is totally different from our common sense.”

Luke 18:9-14

Jesus also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves, thinking they were righteous, but who looked down on everyone else: “Two men went up to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, ‘O God, I thank you that I’m not like other

people—thieves, dishonest people, adulterers, or even this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I give a tenth of my entire income.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance and would not even look up to heaven. Instead, he continued to beat his chest and said, ‘O God, be merciful to me, the sinner that I am!’ I tell you, this man, rather than the other one, went down to his home justified, because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the person who humbles himself will be exalted.”

These verses clarify what the Lord wants us to understand through the Bible—if you humble yourself, you will absolutely be accepted. Contrarily, those who believe that they will be accepted because of their good deeds are already going against the intention of the Lord God. Jesus said;

Luke 16:15

You try to justify yourselves in front of people, but God knows your hearts, because what is highly valued by people is detestable to God.

The Lord knows everything about us. So, he does not have to judge us from our appearance. He looks into our heart as explained in the next few verses.

1 Samuel 16:7

The Lord told Samuel, “Don’t look at his appearance or his height, for I’ve rejected him. Truly, God does not see what man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord sees the heart.”

Hebrews 11:6

Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who diligently search for him.

So many people believe that they are justified by God because of the righteous life they live. However, what matters is not what we believe but what the Lord God considers, that is to say, “what the Bible says about it.” Instead of relying on your own thoughts, you always need to consult the Bible on everything.

Wrong Expectation 2:

I will go to heaven because I live an ethically right life.

It is clear from the Bible that this kind of belief is absolutely pointless. The Lord God insists that no one is righteous, regardless of what they believe. Natural men are full of sins from the time they are born till they experience repentance. Such people are walking on “the path toward death.” No matter what they wear, no matter with whom they walk, and

most importantly, no matter what they do on their way, their path leads to death without exception.

Proverbs 14:12

There is a pathway that seems right to a man, but in the end it's a road to death.

Isaiah 64:6

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a filthy rag.

Genesis 8:21

human inclinations remain evil from youth.

Ecclesiastes 7:20

For there is not a single righteous man on earth who practices good and does not sin.

What matters is which way you are walking. If you want to go to heaven, you have to choose the way that leads to the salvation, which is already prepared by Jesus.

I repeat that the Lord God looks at our hearts. Nothing can be hidden from the eyes of God. The Bible describes in these verses what those who refuse to experience the repentance look like.

2 Peter 2:18-19

By talking high-sounding nonsense and using sinful cravings of the flesh, they entice people who have just escaped from those who live in error. Promising them freedom, they themselves are slaves to depravity.

Psalms 17:10

They are imprisoned by their own prosperity, they have boasted proudly with their mouth.

1 Peter 5:5

God opposes the arrogant, but gives grace to the humble.

**Wrong Expectation 3:
Because God is love, he would never lead humans to destruction.**

Some people believe, that “because God is love, because God is the one to protect humans, he would never lead us to destruction.” If you are one of them, you need to understand the true nature of the Lord God and the reality of his love.

The very first thing we need to know is the fact that the Lord God “loves humans from the bottom of his heart.” His love was so deep that he sent his only begotten Son to this earth and sacrificed him on the cross for our sins. The most precious one chose to die for the sins of humans created by himself.

1 John 4:9-10

This is how God's love was revealed among us: God sent his unique Son (Jesus) into the world so that we might live through him. This is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Romans 5.8

But God demonstrates his love for us by the fact that the Messiah died for us while we were still sinners.

The Bible proclaims the love of the Lord God toward humans in every page. Please read out the following verses slowly and repeatedly and you will be overwhelmed by the depth of the love the Lord God has for each one of us. The Bible is an experience to be relished rather than merely to be read through. It requires listening through your heart rather than read by your eyes.

John 3:16

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his unique Son so that everyone who believes in him might not be lost but have eternal life.

Romans 8:32

The one who did not spare his own Son, but offered him as a sacrifice for all of us, surely will give us all things, along with his Son, won't he?

Isaiah 53:5

But he (Jesus) was wounded for our transgressions, and he was crushed for our iniquities, and the punishment that made us whole was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed.

This is how the Lord God loves humans. These verses tell us how the Lord wants humans to accept his blessing and salvation. It is clearly against his will for our souls to head toward destruction. It only occurs when we negate the love of God and “decide to stay on the path that leads to destruction at our own will.” It might be more precise to say that it occurs, when “we purposely choose the way to perish.”

1 Timothy 2:4

[God our Savior,] who wants all people to be saved and to come to know the truth fully.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some people understand slowness, but is being patient with you. He does not want anyone to perish, but wants everyone to repent.

Ezekiel 33:11

Tell them, 'As certainly as I'm alive and living,' declares the Lord God, 'I receive no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Instead, my pleasure is

that the wicked repent from their behavior and live. Turn back! Turn back, all of you, from your wicked behavior! Why do you have to die, you house of Israel?’

John 3:15

[so must the Son of Man (Jesus) be lifted up,] so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

John 3:18-19

Whoever believes in him (Jesus) is not condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God’s unique Son. And this is the basis for judgment: The light has come into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light because their actions were evil.

If you believe that “God is love and he would never judge men”, you will one day learn the righteous judgment that will be imposed on those who refuse to obey the words of the God, the Creator of all things.

Romans 2:4-5

Or are you unaware of his rich kindness, forbearance, and patience, that it is God’s kindness that is leading you to repent? But because of your stubborn and unrepentant heart you are reserving wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.

As written here, all men will face judgment because of their stubborn and unrepentant hearts.

John 3:36

The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who disobeys the Son will not see life. Instead, the wrath of God remains on him.

2 Peter 3:9-11

The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some people understand slowness, but is being patient with you. He does not want anyone to perish, but wants everyone to repent. But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that day the heavens will disappear with a roaring sound, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done on it will be exposed. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, think of the kind of holy and godly people you ought to be...

Isaiah 57:20-21

But the wicked are tossed like the sea; for it is not able to keep still, and its waters toss up mire and mud. “Yet there is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”

John 3:18

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God’s unique Son.

Wrong Expectation 4:

I will go to heaven because I always have done my best.

Let us suppose that someone gets an incurable illness. Will he be released from pain simply because he does everything he can? It is wrong to believe, based on your own values or thoughts, that the Lord would save you if you make your best efforts. There has been absolutely nobody who has received the glory of the Lord simply because “they did everything they could have done.” You will never reach the salvation unless you enter through the path of Jesus. It is unwise to judge and make a decision based on human standards. We need to act based on the standard of the Lord.

Romans 3:23

since all have sinned and continue to fall short of God’s glory.

John

14:6 Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father (the Lord God) except through me.

As is quite obvious to anyone, believing that “you will be saved by making your best efforts” is equivalent to “refusing the salvation of Jesus.”

Romans 10:3

For they [those who refuse the salvation] are ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God while they try to establish their own, and they have not submitted to God’s means to attain righteousness.

‘Good deed’ in the true sense means nothing but to believe in Jesus.

Romans 3:24-25

By his grace they are justified freely through the redemption that is in the Messiah Jesus, whom God offered as a place where atonement by the Messiah’s blood would occur through faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because he had waited patiently to deal with sins committed in the past.

Romans 4:5

However, to someone who does not work, but simply believes in the one who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.

John 3:36

The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who disobeys the Son will not see life. Instead, the wrath of God remains on him.

Hebrews 11:6

Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who diligently search for him.

**Wrong Expectation 5:
I will be fine as far as I believe in some god.**

I wonder whether those who think this way understand the meaning of true faith. They might be in danger of believing in the devil unknowingly. It is a horrible mistake to believe that any kind of religion can save men.

James 2:19

You believe that there is one God. That's fine! Even the demons believe that and tremble with fear.

It is not that all religions bring salvation. In fact, true salvation can only be attained by faith granted as a gift from the Lord God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by such grace you have been saved through faith. This does not come from you; it is the gift of God and not the result of actions, to put a stop to all boasting.

There is a requirement that needs to be fulfilled in order to receive this gift of grace of salvation. It is the repentance.

Mark 1:15

The time is now! The kingdom of God is near! Repent, and keep believing the gospel!

Repentance and faith are like two wheels of a cart. Faith without repentance is nothing but self-satisfaction. It is just like a flower with no root, which may look so beautiful to the eyes but is not connected with Jesus and thus has neither real life nor bears any fruit. Contrarily, repentance that is not accompanied with faith is like a mirage, from which no true joy or hope emerges. It will only leave you with bitterness and regret. Not until we repent to the Lord God will we be convinced that we are totally forgiven.

Acts 2:37-38

When the crowd that had gathered heard this, they were pierced to the heart. They asked Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" Peter answered them, "Every one of you must repent"

Acts 3:19

Therefore, repent and turn to him to have your sins blotted out.

'Conversion' refers to having belief in Jesus. To believe is "to seek for the grace of cleansing your sins and to be grateful for having that grace." This grace can never be attained by human efforts or brought out by change of situation; instead it is granted by the Lord. So, we should rejoice under any circumstances and all believers should share this testimony in these verses;

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus the Messiah. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace by which we have been established, and we boast because of our hope in God's glory.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance that what we hope for will come about and the certainty that what we cannot see exists.

Some people say that they will go to heaven because they belong to churches or they have faith in something. Surprisingly, others even believe that all people go to heaven when they die. It is understandable that such assumptions help ease their minds. But, if they think of going to heaven, why don't they move one step further and seriously seek the 'real salvation' granted by the true God? Don't be satisfied with fake salvation, which will leave you disappointed and lead you toward destruction. You may find out at a later time but it might be irreparable by then, which is so unwise. You ought to seek to receive the true salvation from the beginning. To do so, it absolutely takes the forgiveness your sins, the reception of the Holy Spirit as well as your regeneration.

John 3:3

Jesus replied to him, "Truly, I tell you emphatically, unless a person is born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:6

What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.

1 Peter 1:23

For you have been born again, not by a seed that perishes but by one that cannot perish—by the living and everlasting word of God.

Keeping 'wrong expectations' is extremely dreadful. After they fall into eternal destruction, they will realize how their expectations have been wrong, but

it will be too late by then. This is why the eyes of those who have 'wrong expectations' need to be opened. All 'wrong expectations' must be taken away from our hearts. This is actually the responsibility we bear, since it is more important than anything for the Lord God that not even one of us should perish.

End