

[1] What does the Bible say? - Part 5
Why don't you believe? - Answering 14 Questions 1.
Unser Herr lebt 17
Gotthold Beck

主は生きておられる 17 号に掲載された、『聖書は何と言っていますか第 5 回、あなたはなぜ信じないのですか? - 十四の質問に答える(上)』を英訳したものです。

After God created everything on Heaven and Earth, He created humans. God did not create humans as mindless robots to obey His intentions. He instead allowed them to love and follow Him by their own free will. However, against the intentions of the Lord God, humans chose to defy His words and became slaves of sins. Because of this, God nailed his only begotten son on the cross to forgive our sins by His blood. Through this incredible miracle, God was able to release us from sin. It is promised that anyone who believes this fact and accepts Jesus as their Lord will be taken up as a child of God. Anyone, in any situation, will be saved if they just believe in Jesus—there are no other conditions required.

Jesus provides your salvation at no charge. To be saved, you do not need to make any effort, do good things or even study at all. You only need to believe that Jesus is your savior. There couldn't be anything simpler and easier. But there are still so many people who hesitate to accept this free gift of salvation. These people say that they have reasons not to believe in Jesus' power of salvation; but are there really meaningful reasons to keep people from believing? Today I would like to think about and discuss fourteen of the most typical reasons.

1. I do not deserve to be saved.

Humans by nature make excuses for everything they do, to avoid taking responsibility. It is the nature of man to not want to admit his own sins. So, if someone has admitted that they are a sinner, that person is already under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

We are all sinners—no one is an exception. But the Lord died for us sinners and He still loves us. Just like an ailing person needs a doctor, sinners need only the Lord.

Romans

5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Luke

5:31 And Jesus answering said to them. They that are whole need not a physician. but they that are sick.

5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

19:10 For the Son of man(Jesus) is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

The Lord sacrificed Himself to save sinners. When cleansed by the blood of Jesus, all sins are forgiven and all sinners obtain eternal life. Jesus will never turn away anyone who comes to Him. The Lord is still sending these words to us today:

Isaiah

1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

John

6:37 All that the Father(The Lord God) gives me(Jesus) shall come to me. and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.

3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son(Jesus), that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Here is the testimony of Paul:

1Timothy

1:15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

Paul here said that he was “*The worst of the sinful people*”. He continues in the next verse, saying, “*for the very reason, I received mercy*” (1 Timothy 1:16). It is only because the Lord has mercy on us that men can be saved. The Lord died for all sinners. Without the mercy of the Lord, there would be nothing left for most people who have admitted their sins other than desperation.

For example, so many unborn children are aborted these days just because their parents want to enjoy their free life or simply because they do not want a child. Most of these people will eventually have to admit that they have committed a murder. When they recognize the weight of their sins, they will be overwhelmed by desperation. Similarly, David, who was drawn away by *his own* lust and murdered his own loyal subject, later testified:

Psalms

51:14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, Oh God, you God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

32:5 I acknowledged my sin to you (The Lord God), and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Through his prayers, David came to have the firm conviction that his sins were forgiven. The next few verses explain how the Lord forgives sin.

Psalms

103:9 He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever.

103:10 He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

103:11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

The Lord does not just forgive our sins—He also forgets them. The almighty God forgets them on purpose. This is called being 'justified' and it is an unimaginable blessing for us. All sins are forgiven because of the blood the Lord shed, regardless of whether you are aware of it or not.

1 John

1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Isaiah

44:22 I (The Lord God) have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins, return to me, for I have redeemed you.

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If you humble yourself before the Lord, you will absolutely be accepted into His arms. You will be accepted forever. Even if you are terrible sinner and that you do not deserve salvation, it does not matter—your own judgment has no meaning in front of the Lord's decision to bless you with salvation. No one is free from sin in the eyes of the Lord God. Do you just want to humble yourself in front of Jesus, or do you want to justify yourself? This is the only choice presented to you. If you are humble before the Lord, He will never fail to bless you. Let's look at the story of the prodigal son Jesus spoke of:

Luke

15:11 And he said. A certain man had two sons:

15:12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. And he divided to them his living.

15:13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

15:14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land. and he began to be in want.

15:15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country. and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

15:16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. and no man gave to him.

15:17 And when he came to himself, he said. How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

15:18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father. I have sinned against heaven, and before you,

15:19 And am no more worthy to be called your son. make me as one of your hired servants.

15:20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

15:21 And the son said to him. Father. I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son.

15:22 But the father said to his servants. Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him. and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

15:23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it. and let us eat, and be merry:

15:24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again. he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

This son took his father's money and left him to set out on a journey to enjoy his own life. He had no contact with his father during this time. But when the son repented and came back, his father wrapped him in a big hug. The love of this father represents Jesus' compassion toward us. Jesus always wants us to repent. He's waiting for us to come back to the Lord God.

2. I need to change myself to be saved.

"A person like me does not deserve to be saved. I need to try hard to change myself to be saved." Some people think in this way. However, the intentions of Jesus are totally different. Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross for the world's sinners, not for those who believed they were righteous. The Lord made it very clear when he said:

Luke

5:31 And Jesus answering said to them. They that are whole need not a physician. but they that are sick.

5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

If you believe that you have to change yourself before coming to Jesus, you do not truly understand what sins are. Your sins cannot be cleansed by your own efforts. These kinds of efforts are meaningless.

Jeremiah

2:22 For though you wash you with nitre, and take you much sope, yet your iniquity is marked before me, says the Lord God.

Jeremiah

13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may you also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

The prodigal son, from the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 15, did not even think of making himself look better before coming back to his father. He arrived in front of his father in miserable plight. "*Father, I have sinned against heaven and you. I don't deserve to be called your son anymore.*" The father held his son tight in his arms. What is most important to God is that you are humble like this son. It is also written in another part of the Bible.

Luke

18:9 And he spoke this parable to certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

18:10 Two men went up into the temple to pray. the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God. I thank you, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

18:12 I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess.

18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying. God be merciful to me a sinner.

18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. for every one that exalts himself shall be abased. and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.

The Pharisees believed that they were a righteous people. They proudly claimed to God that they followed all laws laid out in the Bible. On the other hand, the tax collector admitted that he was terribly sinful and entrusted everything to the Lord. This is why he was justified by the Lord God. Nothing is more important than being humble in front of the Lord.

3. I can't escape from a life of vice.

Some people think that they have gone too deep into their evil ways and that they won't be able to come back. There are actually two types of mindsets for these people. Some of them have the wrong impression that they won't be saved because they can't leave the path of the sinner. Others think that regardless of whether or not they can be saved, they can't leave the path of evil.

Let's look at the first kind of people. They need to realize that all men are actually dead because of their sins until they obtain the salvation of Jesus—this is without exception. We are all spiritually dead and there is no difference in degree. Jesus came into this world to save these spiritually dead sinners. The Lord never asks us what we did in the past or how we are now. He just asks whether we want to face Jesus with honest mind—everything begins there. In other words, we only have two choices. Do we want to be reborn and obtain a new life, or do we want to refuse salvation and walk the path to the destruction?

John

3:36 He that believes on the Son (Jesus) has everlasting life. and he that believes not the Son shall not see life. but the wrath of God abides on him.

Galatians

6:7 Be not deceived. God is not mocked. for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

6:8 For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Romans

6:23 For the wages of sin is death. but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Next, it is in fact possible for those who want to abandon their evil conduct. Of course, if they attempt to do it by themselves, they will fail. It will be pathetic and only end in despair. But it can be accomplished if they totally rely on the Lord, by the power of Jesus. There is no need to give up.

Philippians
4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.

Jesus promised that we will be released from the power of sin. So, if we come close to the Lord, we can get away from all sin.

John
8:36 If the Son(Jesus) therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

Hebrews
7:25 Therefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them.

You only need to do one thing to break out of the vicious cycle: to come to Jesus and obey Him. There is no other way. The Lord has already overcome the world and all sins. When you obey Jesus, you will be able to participate in the victory of Jesus, who has overcome the world. So, there is no need to be scared of anything and there is no need for you to worry about whether you could overcome your problems by yourself. The next few verses prove this fact.

Romans
6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.
6:13 Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. but yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you. for you are not under the law, but under grace.

1 John
5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world. and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.
5:5 Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

4. I have to give up so many things to be saved.

Some people are afraid that they will have to give up so many things to be saved and after they are saved as well. The fact of the matter is that those who are saved will naturally throw away so many things. It is necessary; we can't take everything with us when we die. Furthermore, no matter how great your prestige or fame is, or how well-esteemed you are, you will not be saved from the punishment of eternal destruction. The only thing important for you, the only thing you need, is a life that belongs to Christ.

If you can't overcome the temptation of this life, you won't be allowed to live the life Jesus has prepared for you, and you won't see the glorious riches that await you. Shouldn't we leave behind the things we have obtained in this world and choose a way that directs us to the truly important things, instead of heading toward destruction, where we will lose everything?

Mark
8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

1 John
2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father(the Lord God) is not in him.
2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.
2:17 And the world passes away, and the lust thereof. but he that does the will of God abides for ever.

Moses and Paul were also richly blessed when they abandoned everything for Jesus. They received everything they deserved from the Lord God.

The Bible also describes Moses, who was raised as the child of an Egyptian Princess.

Hebrews

11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh(the King of Egypt)'s daughter;

11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

11:26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Moses had a greater perspective of the truth. He chose to accept the greater riches given by Christ rather than to enjoy the sinful pleasures of this world. His decision eventually led to the release of two million people from slavery.

Paul was a true elite who received the highest quality education of his time. He first refused to accept Jesus as his Lord, and acted upon his belief that persecuting the believers of Christ was the will of God. However, when he finally came to know Christ, he suddenly realized that all things that he believed were totally meaningless, and in fact, that it was because of these things he was kept away from Christ.

Philippians

3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Here, Paul wrote, "Christ Jesus, my Lord". In other words, he was saying that he was a servant of Christ. Back then, servants were practically slaves who simply had to obey all orders from their masters. Just like a slave, when Paul met Jesus, Jesus instantly became everything in his life.

When you abandon something for the Lord, you do not actually lose it. In fact, the Lord God leaves only what you really need. We are blinded by our own desires and social lives, and believe in valueless things. Actually, we make ourselves busy just like slaves when we follow our own pursuits.

The Lord God created all things between heaven and earth as well as all humans. So He knows us very well, and thus knows what we truly need. On the other hand, He also knows what we do not need, what we do not have to have. To those who rely on Him, He provides everything they truly need.

Psalms

84:11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield. the Lord will give grace and glory. no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

84:12 Oh Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in you.

Romans

8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

John

3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

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The Lord God loves each one of us. This is because "*now is really the right time, now is the day of salvation*". We all will be saved if we just repent. Unless we listen to the words of the Lord God and accept his will, there will be no salvation. In addition, we need to accept salvation while it remains presented to us.

Luke

16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

16:20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

16:21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

16:24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

16:25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

16:26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

16:27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

16:28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

16:29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

16:31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

5. You will lose your friends, when you have faith.

It is so hard to live a lonely life. This is why people say they need friends. But will your friends come with you to the valley of death? Can they save you from eternal destruction? No matter how many friends you have in this world, there is nothing they can do for the salvation of your life. In the Gospel according to John, 15:15, Jesus said, "*I have called you friends*". Jesus is a true friend who sacrificed his life on the cross for your sins, and He will walk with you until the end of the world. The important thing is not whether you will lose all your friends; it is whether you have found a true friend.

Psalms

1:1 Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord. and in his law does he meditate day and night.

Proverbs

13:20 He that walks with wise men shall be wise. but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

James

4:4 you adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Matthew

19:29 And every one that has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my(Jesus) name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

6. I am afraid of being ridiculed.

Being ridiculed is not so pleasant. But, isn't it far better than falling into eternal destruction? Besides, when someone ridicules you because of your belief in the truth of the Lord, they are actually ridiculing themselves. There is no need to be afraid or to be ashamed of being ridiculed. In fact, if you are afraid of being ridiculed, you are ashamed of your Lord. If you fear humans and try to avoid ridicule, you will be caught in a trap. Those who fear God won't fear people. The reward for fearing the Lord is wealth, honor and life. The next few verses are very encouraging in this sense:

Proverbs

29:25 The fear of man brings a snare. but whoso puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

Mark

8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me (Jesus) and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation. of him also shall the Son of man (Jesus) be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Proverbs

22:4 By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.

Why do people fear something they do not have to? It's because they are caught up in reality and cannot see or imagine anything else, and thus cannot find the truth. Even though humans are so weak and helpless, when the eyes of their hearts are opened and they find the truths that are invisible to human eyes, they will have nothing to fear.

2Kings

6:16And he(Elijah) answered. Fear not. for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

David testified:

Psalms

27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation. whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life. of whom shall I be afraid?

The Lord is alive. So if you entrust yourself to the Lord, you do not have to worry about anything. As a good shepherd, the Lord protects you and provides you with all the guidance you truly need. Jesus sacrificed his life and died on the cross to save us. When you shift your focus of attention onto Him, you can finally entrust everything to Him and feel so relieved. Solomon, the king of Judea, is known as one of the wisest man in history. The word of Solomon is recorded in the Proverb 1:7: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*. Those who fear other men will end up as their slaves without knowing it.

After all, we have only two choices: to fear humans or to fear the Lord. Only when we fear the Lord who created this world, who exists forever, who rules all things in history, will we be free from the fear of things that will eventually waste away.

Psalms

34:8 Oh taste and see that the Lord is good. blessed is the man that trusts in him(The Lord God).

1Peter

3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers. but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

3:13 And who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?

3:14 But and if you suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are you. and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.

Revelation

14:7 Saying with a loud voice. Fear God, and give glory to him. for the hour of his judgment is come. and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.