



# Foundation of Faith

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THE KING SAID IT!

“I WILL HELP YOU!”

RAYS OF HOPE FOR  
THE BROKENHEARTED

NEVER FORSAKEN

EXPERIENCES WITH GOD

GOD'S  
PROMISES

AUGUST 2019

# Content

## GOD'S PROMISES

**4 The King Said It!**

**4 Saved from Lions**

**6 When God Promises Something**

*Sometimes it seems as if God has forgotten His promises, but makes all things beautiful in His time.*

**8 A God Who Helps**

**10 Rays of Hope for the Brokenhearted**

**11 Is Anything Too Hard for God?**

*What is impossible with man is always possible with God.*

**12 I Will Guide You with My Eyes**

*What a wonderful promise of God to His children!*

**16 "Only Speak a Word"**

**17 God's Promises**

## POEMS

**13 Never Forsaken**

**28 God's Promises**

## RADIO BROADCAST

**14 The Faithful Promises of God**

**3 Editorial**

**18 YOUTH PAGE**  
**Yes, But**

**19 Lessons From School (7)**

## CHILDREN'S CORNER

**20 "I Will Help You!"**

**21 Announcements**

## ON THE ROAD OF SALVATION

**22 The Fiery Poison of Sin (Part 7)**

## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

**24 Do You Have Your Passport to Heaven?**

## STORY

**26 God's Leading**

**21/ 27 Experiences With God**

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## Editorial

*Dear Reader!*

*The wise King Solomon reported in his time: "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind" (Ecclesiastes 1:14).*

*Yes, we too observe the world's happenings and may ask ourselves what will come to pass. Whether it's politics, the economy, the climate, the many new ideas and all of the so-called scientific predictions, questions may often arise: "What is the truth, and what will these many promises bring us?" I have to think of the word in Proverbs 25:14, "Whoever falsely boasts of giving is like clouds and wind without rain."*

*But, my dear Reader, how good it is that we have a heavenly Father, a wise and mighty God! His promises are true forever. Even today, they are "yes and amen" for you and for me.*

*When He sends clouds, wind, and rain, then the earth will be fertile and produce seeds and prosper. "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void. But it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).*

*Therefore, we can entrust our entire lives to the Lord. What the influential people of the world say, do, and promise is often vain, worthless, and a grasping for the wind. But what Jesus, the Son of God, promises us through His plan of salvation is something we can experience. The fulfillment of godly promises is accessible to us through faith in Jesus. We can confidently accept everything that the Lord says and then say with thanksgiving:*

*'Tis true, o yes, 'tis true.  
God's wonderful promise is true;  
For I've trusted and tested and tried it,  
And I know God's promise is true.*

*Praise be to God forever and ever!*

*H. D. Nimz*

# The *King* Said It!

**K**ing Ludwig II of Bavaria once journeyed through Switzerland, where an old, faithful skipper often took him for boat rides on Lake Lucerne. The king was pleased with the old man, patted him on the shoulder in farewell, and said: "Eberhard, you must come visit me in my home in Munich sometime."

The skipper agreed, with the firm intention of following through in accepting the King's invitation. His comrades however laughed at him and said: "Eberhard, you are a fool! You will look really great arriving in Munich! The king was just making fun of you!" The old man maintained: "The king said it!" After five years, he went on his journey.

It almost seemed as if his comrades had been right, for the king's servants rejected the skipper outright when he requested to see the king. But then he met an officer who

had also been in Switzerland. When the officer announced the visitor to the king, King Ludwig had him brought to the castle immediately. He received him kindly, treated him royally, and showed him around the palace. When the servants saw this, they also treated him politely.

The king wanted to keep the skipper in Munich. When he graciously refused, he let him go and gave him a gold watch, which Eberhard triumphantly showed his friends at home as proof that his faith in the invitation had not been in vain.

Many who call themselves believers react the same way with the promises of God as the friends of that skipper did with the invitation of the King of Bavaria. They think that God is just giving His promises in jest. But if an earthly king can keep his word, how much more will the King of heaven and truth keep His? ■

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# Saved From *Lions*

*A missionary who served for many years in Africa shares her experience.*

**I** have no idea how many lions Daniel encountered while he was in the lion's den. The number of lions is irrelevant. The main point is that the Lord shut those lions' mouths so that the prophet remained safe and unharmed.

Personally, I have never been in a lion's den; however, I encountered seven lions while walking on a road. My confrontation with these animals was so near that I sensed their peculiar strong odor, and I could see my reflection in their flashing eyes. My great Lord also shut these lions' mouths and prevented them from laying a paw on me.

I was given the task to obtain something from our remote station. Once finished, I returned home with Musa, my dedicated African servant. It was Monday morning. We started on our journey with our bicycles at the break of dawn, and by 8:00 am we had most of the trip behind us. This was when we encountered the pride of lions.

Our route led us through a thicket of bushes, which in some locations was well known for the tsetse fly. These

flies can be very harmful to travelers. In a blink of an eye, we were surrounded by a swarm of biting insects. And to add to this harm, a tire burst on my brave Musa's bicycle. Of course, he had to get off in order to repair the tire. Due to the flies, I was unable to wait for him. Therefore, I left this small grove as quickly as possible. The path began to climb, and even though I drove slowly, I soon lost sight of Musa. As I was looking ahead, suddenly, in the glaring sunlight, I noticed some movement on the road. It was a pride of not less than seven lions, three large, mature ones plus four half grown. They were crossing the road ahead of me.

At first I thought these animals did not notice me. I got off of my bicycle and tried to hide from them. Immediately, one of the large, mature lions slowly turned around and glared into my face. I will never forget that awful gaze from that lion. I was still about one hundred meters away from him, but I felt as though he was debating whether to have mercy or attack. There was not a thing that I could do to save myself. Only one thing came



to mind, and I started repeatedly praying: “Lord, you can do anything!”

For a moment, I stood petrified. The lion was staring at me with an eerie and majestic seriousness. I thought I would try and see if he would follow me if I turned my back to him. Very slowly, I started going back to the grove of trees. I tried to keep the lion’s head in view by often slowly turning my head. But after my first step, the animal turned and rushed to his six companions. Soon, the pride of lions disappeared into a thicket of bushes off to the left.

I wanted to run, but my feet would not move, just like in a bad dream. Panting and exhausted, I reached the top of the hill. As I turned around, I saw my servant Musa coming towards me. I shared my astonishing story with him. He was in total disbelief that I utterly had to give my head a shake and ask myself if it was a dream. We then continued our journey.

After a short time again, we noticed two powerful animals slowly crossing the road. I turned and asked: “Musa, what is that?” —“Mayu, it is lions,” he said. “Now we are very near death!”

We could now count six animals on the road ahead of us. Once again—through our human eyes—it seemed like it would be impossible to escape. My servant and I prayed this short prayer: “Lord, You love us and You will

take care of us; we trust in You.” Then we continued going forward. My nerves were completely shot. My whole body was shaking and trembling, but we continued on with courage.

After a couple of hours, we again came to the place where I had had my first encounter with the lions. I saw another lion. This lion was very near to me, only several meters away. Slowly, he was coming out of the woods, and just like before, he was staring at us sternly. Softly, I whispered to Musa: “We appear to be in the middle of a wandering caravan of lions. Nevertheless, we want to continue forward.” As we came upon the lion, we were so near to him that we could almost touch him; suddenly, he turned to the left and with a few leaps disappeared back into the woods. It was a huge, scary animal.

As I lost sight of the lion, I fell from my bicycle and collapsed to the ground. The same thing happened to Musa. He was completely terrified, and appeared ashen due to the fear of death. We continued our escape. Musa followed behind walking as his nerves were stressed.

We arrived home near midnight. Inwardly, I was so full of joy from this experience that I forgot the tiredness that had felt like unbearable physical pain.

If God can save from the lions, couldn’t He save you from your small hardships and dangers as well? ■

# When God Promises Something

*“Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.” (Joshua 23:14)*

These words were spoken by Joshua, Israel’s faithful leader. They were spoken in his old age, shortly before he died. He could speak them because he knew from experience what God had done for His people. He knew that God always did what He had promised and that one could count on the promises of God. The Word of God has thousands of promises, and we, His children, are the heirs of every one of these promises. Oh what a wonderful privilege is ours!

God is teaching His children patience when He lets them wait for the fulfillment of some of these promises. Abraham was already an old man when God promised him a son and even told him that all nations on earth would be blessed through his seed, and that his seed would become as numerous as the sand on the seashore. It may have seemed as if God wanted to undermine His promise when He asked Abraham to sacrifice his own son. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that Abraham died without seeing the promise fulfilled. Yet he did not doubt that God would do what He said. And how wonderfully the promise has been fulfilled!

## *The Promise of a Savior*

God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and gave them a command that they did not obey. After they had sinned and God drove them from the garden, He promised them a Savior. They, however, did not see this promise fulfilled. Many generations came and went, and the Savior still had not come. They offered sacrifices for their sins, yet these could not save them from sin. Had God forgotten His promise?

No, “when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law” (Galatians 4:4-5). Likely, most had forgotten about the promise, but not God. One night, heavenly messengers appeared to the shepherds in the fields and proclaimed: “there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). The shepherds came and saw the Messiah, the Savior promised long ago. He was the one that bruised the head of the serpent as God had promised Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:15). At times, the promise seemed to be in jeopardy. Herod tried to kill the Christ child, but God kept Him safe. During His earthly ministry, Jesus was rejected and would repeatedly depart from where they sought to kill Him. Then came that horrible death on the cross, followed by the tomb. Yet, did the promise come to naught? No, praise God, Christ is our risen and exalted Savior, who still today is able to save from all sin!



### *The Promise of the Holy Spirit*

“And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh” (Joel 2:28a). After this promise had been given, 800 years passed, and the Holy Spirit still had not come. Before His ascension, Jesus commanded His disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Father. In Acts 2:1, we read: “when the day of Pentecost had fully come,” not one day earlier and not a day later, the Holy Spirit came and filled the whole house. The Comforter had come! And what a tremendous change had come over the disciples! Peter, who had been so timid and previously denied his Lord before a servant girl, now stood and testified with fiery confidence. The promise of the Holy Spirit is still there for us today. Praise the Lord!

### *The Promise Concerning the Church*

Jesus said: “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). His promise is true. Christ did build His Church, a light in this dark world. Its special characteristics included purity, unity, and power. Multitudes were saved from their sins, and great miracles were done. But this glory only lasted a short time. The light diminished, and darkness moved in. Instead of unity, there was strife, dissension, and disunity. The precious teachings of our Lord Jesus were no longer upheld. Traditions and doctrines of men came to be taught instead. Vanity and the love of the world crept in. Those who still worshiped God in Spirit and truth went underground because they feared for their lives.

This condition lasted hundreds of years. What had happened to the promise? Did the Lord Himself not say that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church? Yes, praise God, the Church once again became visible and began to shine as a light in the world. The wonderful truth of salvation is openly and freely preached, and the redeemed of the Lord are returning to the spiritual unity of the Church.

### *The Promise of the Second Coming*

Before His ascension, Jesus told His disciples that He would come again. Since this promise was given, about 2000 years have already passed, and He has not returned yet. But when the time was fulfilled, God sent His Son into the world at His first coming. When the day of Pentecost was fulfilled, the Holy Spirit came. In the same way, the Father has set the day when Jesus will come again. We do not know the hour, nor the day of His coming, but we know that He will return. The promises of God always come to pass because they are given by our unchanging God.

There are many scoffers in the world, as was the case when Peter lived “saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation’” (2 Peter 3:4). Let the unbelievers mock. God’s promises remain sure. When the Lord returns, “every eye will see Him” (Revelation 1:7). ■

B. M.

# A God Who Helps

*“Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation! Our God is the God of salvation.” (Psalm 68:19-20)*

**W**e often find ourselves in a situation in which we need help. We all have an inner need to lean upon an arm that is stronger than our own, stronger than any other person's, in fact. We have burdens to bear but can actually only find one person who truly is able to help us carry them. Yes, He has promised to help us, not only once or twice, but throughout our entire pilgrimage, He will help and strengthen, if we desire His help. At all times, He has been the strong and mighty Helper and Savior for His people. No matter what situation we are in, whether surrounded by enemies or faced with insurmountable problems, or when we are sorely tempted, we are reminded that “He is the God of our salvation.”

We read in Psalm 34:20: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” “However,” you might say, “I have far greater struggles than others.” Then hear: “He shall deliver

you in six troubles, yes, in seven no evil shall touch you” (Job 5:19). No tribulation is so great that God cannot safely get you through it.

So how can you experience God's help in your trouble? “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me” (Psalm 50:15). If we call on the Lord for help, He will incline His ear and fulfill His promise. God will not ignore any sincere call for help. However, it might not come in the shape or form that we had imagined or expected. Because God is omniscient, He will direct the outcome to be the best according to His wisdom. One thing is certain: if we trust Him and love Him, He will help us and rescue us from any peril that we find ourselves in. We can completely count on it.

People might be caught up in spiritual struggles and sense that they may not be right before God. Perhaps the evil one has set a trap, and they have just stepped into it. They have been tempted and have

succumbed to temptation. Supposing they have been defeated, God wants to be their Helper even then. Note the splendid promise: “Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence” (Psalm 91:3). In a two-fold manner, God rescues from the snare of the fowler and from the trap which the enemy of your soul sets. Firstly, He wants to protect you from falling into that snare; and secondly, He wants to set you free if you had the misfortune of being caught in it. Therefore, do not be discouraged even if the evil one has managed to entangle you in his net. Remember, God can and wants to help you and set you free.

There are many difficulties with which we would not need to be troubled with if we would walk more carefully and daily seek strength and grace from the Lord. It is true that Satan, as well as evil-minded people, try to lay a snare for us. We are tempted in various ways throughout





our lives. They will try to persuade us to do things that will lead us into sin. God allows temptations but has made provisions for us not to be overcome but to be victorious in all things.

It often happens that those whom we love unknowingly set traps for us. They want us to do things that are wrong and can lead us into sin. God can deliver us and enable us to decisively counter that with a “no.” We must trust God that He will give us grace and strength to stand firm. It is possible to eventually give in to a temptation because we are wearied and then completely give up. Very often, we are tempted by others to do things that harm our soul. Some people might try to persuade us to go to places that we should not be going to, or they entice us to act against the warnings of our conscience. Under no circumstance should we act in a manner that counters our moral principles in order to please someone else. Even here, let it be said:

“We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

False teachings are traps that are laid to ensnare our feet. The world is full of false teachings, which cause many to be led astray. It is not necessary, though, that anyone be led astray. There are so many deceptive things in this world that seem to promise a lot of good but in reality are an entrapment of Satan. Some even promise great spiritual gifts or powers but are actually the bait of Satan’s snare. It is completely natural for God’s children to desire strength and spiritual gifts. However, in striving for these natural and good desires, some souls have fallen captive to false teachings and fallacies. Many good and sincere people have become prey of different movements and have suffered harm to their souls. Beware of the trap of false teachings! Always take your spiritual needs directly to God and pour out your heart to Him. He will never withhold what He sees as good

for us in His unending wisdom. Once we have recognized the truth, we should never turn from it to acquire new truth. That is a firm and irrevocable fact. Godly truth never contradicts itself.

There will be times in which we are called to fight. We must counter evil and overcome it. Israel often battled courageously to claim victory over the enemies. We must do likewise, spiritually speaking. Israel was always victorious when they trusted God and were obedient to Him. But when they counted on their own strength, they always lost. That is exactly what will happen to us if we battle in our own strength. We cannot claim victory without God’s assistance. However, if we put our trust in Him and bravely fight and do our part, victory will be ours. No enemy can restrain nor conquer us.

Let us remember that the battle is the Lord’s. He is our strength and our help. He wants to be our all in all! ■

# *Rays of Hope for the Brokenhearted*

**D**ear Soul, perhaps you are finding yourself in a pit of downheartedness and on the brink of despair; you are being driven back and forth by the enemy of the soul, being oppressed and overwhelmed with bitter accusations, maybe even have been overcome by Satan and have fallen into sin. Be encouraged! Even for you, there is deliverance! Jesus Christ died for you in order to deliver you from sin. He can break all these chains and bonds and set you free. He can set you free from this gloom and allow new hope to enter your heart.

Listen to His words: "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed . . . O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. . . . In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far

from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you" (Isaiah 54:10-14).

Dear Soul, the Almighty God wants to help you! He did not spare His own Son but surrendered Him for you. How can He not give you everything? Believe Him! Throw yourself in His arms, because He gave His life and shed His blood for you, to save you from the power of sin, from the power of Satan and his accusations.

If your soul is wrapped in darkness, even if you feel it is impossible that you could ever come out of this situation, if Satan is constantly afflicting you and insinuating that everything is in vain, that God has turned away from you and death and destruction awaits you, be aware, dear Soul, that there is still help for you. The Lord is kindly calling out to you: "For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you. With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment;

but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,' says the Lord, your Redeemer" (Isaiah 54:7-8). Yes, "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18), says the true God.

Take your eyes off of yourself! Look up to Jesus, look towards the cross on Golgotha! There you will see how the price has been paid for sin, how the Lamb of God, who carried the sins of the world, had victory over Satan. There on Golgotha are rays of hope shining for you. There the face of God is beaming with kindness upon you. God is standing there, with loving arms ready to receive you. There at the foot of the cross, your burden of sin and everything that is pressing and agonizing you will roll away. There, peace and quietness will enter your heart. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (Revelation 12:11). ■

# Is Anything Too Hard for God?

Something wonderful happened in the life of Abraham. The Lord appeared to him in his fields. Three angels came to Abraham, and one of them promised him and Sara a son. Sara, who was past childbearing age, laughed. And the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:13-14).

Sometimes it seems easier to believe on behalf of someone else, yet we find it difficult to believe that God will answer our own prayers in a wonderful way. We compare ourselves to others and find ourselves to be small and insignificant. We list our few accomplishments and minimize their value. Then we consider the “grand deeds” of others and declare that their future will be great.

If you make these kinds of comparisons and allow yourself to be discouraged by them, you will develop an inferiority complex from which you can barely free yourself. We must have strong self-discipline and constantly be on our guard to avoid this kind of harmful negative thinking.

Should anything be too hard for God? Is it too hard for the Lord to rescue your husband or wife, or your

son or daughter who is on the wrong path? Scripture says: “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). Whatever is impossible for man, is possible with God. His power has no limit.

With each blessing from above comes a responsibility. We must expect and accept what is needed from God. Neither salvation nor any other blessing is showered upon us against our wish or will. We must desire it, need it, and express our need to the Lord.

Is it too hard for God to protect us from sin? Jude speaks about God as “Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24). And Jesus said: “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28).

The apostle Paul said, “For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him in that Day” (2 Timothy 1:12).

God has the power to save us from the fire of temptation and trouble. The three young Israelite

men testified about their faith in the protective power of God: “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand” (Daniel 3:17). David said: “The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine” (1 Samuel 17:37). Samuel was able to proclaim: “Thus far the Lord has helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12).

Is it too hard for the Lord to provide for us? The apostle Paul experienced that God took care of his every need. When we trust and obey, then God will fulfill His promises in our lives too.

Is it too hard for Him to make a way where there is no way? “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:6). The way may be difficult, but God says: “I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron” (Isaiah 45:2).

Nothing is too hard for the Lord. He can provide us with everything; He will take care of everything we commit to Him. We must trust His words and His promises! ■

L. T.

# I Will Guide You with My Eyes

**W**e find these words in Psalm 32:8. A strong refuge is found in these words, for they proclaim that God will cover us. The floodwaters of doubt may come, but our God, in whom we have placed our trust, will protect us. When we place our trust in God's goodness we are filled with joy and comfort. We know that the eyes of our Father God are always turned toward us, and this serves us best. There is not a moment in our life where we are not being watched. "He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:4).

God watches over our souls. His desire for us, His children, is to lead us safely through anything that could harm us. He wants to lead us to the bright shore of our heavenly destination. He continually showers us with His love. And if He warns us about threatening danger, this is also for our best. When we hold the hand of our heavenly Father, we walk safely. Under His sheltering watch, we are safe as long as we don't step outside of His protection through disobedience or unbelief.

We should thank God whole-heartedly for the watchful guidance He has promised us. The whole verse is as follows: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye." And the first two verses of Psalm 32 tell us for whom these verses were intended: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." Only when our sins have been forgiven have we been justified by faith in God. The Lord Himself will instruct us and teach us the way

in which we are to go from that point on. On this way we can experience all that the loving heavenly Father has intended for His children. Most certainly, we must abide by God's expectations if we desire to obtain His blessings. But if we remain in obedience toward God, we will receive the testimony of which was written, that we have God's favor. Only in faith, combined with child-like obedience, do we find the strength to have continual victory.

When we are saved, God will lead us with His eyes. And when He leads us, then He guides us on paths of light. Every deed, every feeling, every thought should be brought into the investigative light of God's presence. There we will understand what displeases God and what He rejects. In godly light we can have communion with God, the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ. Only if we remain connected and in communion with God, can He lead us with His eyes.

In order to be led with the eyes, there must be a mutual understanding. People who go the same way experience the same things. They understand each other with a single look or expression. People who walk with God gather so much experience that they can recognize God's "look" in an instant. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). His sheep hear His voice because their whole nature has been changed through rebirth. Through the new birth, we have become children of God, and He has promised to lead His children with His eyes.

Are we there where His eyes can lead us? And do we always follow His godly leading? ■



# Never Forsaken

“No, I will never leave you,  
Forsake you nevermore.  
Though others may deceive you,  
I’ll guide you,” says the Lord.

Are you afraid and lonely—  
Nobody understands?  
Cleave to the Savior only;  
He’ll take you by the hand.

Are you despised and worried?  
Is there no hope in view?  
He who cares for the sparrow  
Will also care for you!

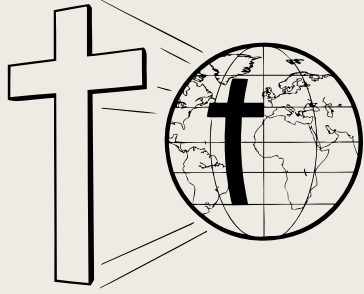
He’ll supply strength and nourish,  
Shelter and make you whole.  
Oh, He wants you to flourish,  
the Bridegroom of your soul.

Build on God’s Word unailing;  
It’s a foundation sure.  
Oh, there is grace availing;  
His promise is secure.

I need not fear nor tremble—  
No one can harm His own!  
Lord, help me to remember  
To look to You alone.

No, He will never leave me,  
Forsake me nevermore,  
Till I am resting sweetly,  
There on that golden shore.

Edeltraut Nimz



# Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs  
Kitchener, ON

## The Faithful Promises of God

*Who can be more credible than our God,  
who is the Truth Himself and has the power to do anything He wants!*

**W**hat is a promise? A promise is a firm, reliable, and binding commitment from God. This type of promise gives us confidence and courage. It awakens faith and security. The word “promise” is primarily applied in Scripture to the promises of the divine act of grace. This is, above all, about the saving and preserving action of God. God would never allow these promises to fail, for we read: “But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting” (Psalm 103:17). He has committed Himself to the fulfillment of His promises, because He stands by His word and has the power to fulfill it. Psalm 33:4 says: “For the word of the Lord is right, and all His work is done in truth.” His righteousness and faithfulness do not permit it to be otherwise.

He saw the deep distress and fallen condition of the people. Sin separated and alienated man from his Creator! Painfully, the Creator called out to Adam, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9). A deep mercy was awakened in God’s heart, and this mercy led to His saving and merciful promises.

The very first Old Testament promise was that a Savior and Redeemer would disarm and conquer His adversary, the devil (Genesis 3:15). From then on, this promise

became greater and clearer. Job, known to us from Scripture, confessed in the midst of his suffering: “For I know that my Redeemer lives” (Job 19:25).

The teachers and prophets believed this and continually preached about this Redeemer through divine inspiration and enlightenment. The prophet Isaiah prophesied the sufferings of Jesus long before they actually happened. It is worth reading the profound, prophetic account of Isaiah 53 over and over again. They believed without seeing and knew that God’s promise would come true.

For the natural good of humanity, God gave a promise that has been fulfilled to this day. Over the centuries and yet today, science believes that there once was a flood. The Bible confirms this incident from the time of Noah. Only eight God-fearing people survived this flood. Noah brought an offering of thanks to the Lord, and in Genesis 8:22 we find this promise: “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.”

Has God kept this promise? Yes, He stands by His word and constantly gives us the promised blessing of an annual harvest. We still experience the wonders of the four seasons and enjoy the benefits of day and night.

Without this promise, physical life would not be possible.

Without the promised and redeeming gift of the Son of God, there would be no salvation from sin and guilt, and no salvation from eternal death. In these two irrefutable facts, we recognize the high value and blessing of divine promises, which we value and constantly thank God for.

In the New Testament, there is sufficient justification for the fact that the promised Redeemer, Jesus Christ, came and fulfilled His work of reconciliation. In faith, Paul affirmed that all the promises of God's salvation in Christ are "yes" and "amen"; that is, they became absolute reality. Jesus, the Son of God, willingly fulfilled this promise. The author of Hebrews writes: "Therefore, when He [Jesus] came into the world, He said: . . . 'Behold I have come . . . to do Your will, O God'" (Hebrews 10:5-7). And in the fulfillment of the divine Word we will see the fulfillment of its promises. We hear the confirmation in the triumphal cry of Jesus on the cross: "It is finished!" (John 19:30). This includes Genesis 3:15, where it says: "He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

In Luke 4, we read about Jesus' first appearance in Nazareth. He read his sermon text from Isaiah 61. Here, Isaiah declared a clear prophecy about how Jesus would

bring salvation. Now Jesus stood before the people of His time and declared: "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21)! The New Testament constantly gives account of the fulfillment of the divine promises.

According to God's plan and will, Christ had begun and completed His ministry in this world. Therefore, Paul could testify: "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us" (1 Corinthians 1:20). This tells us that they are fulfilled; they have become absolute reality. Our Lord now sits at the right hand of the Father and intercedes for us. His work is completed, and John writes, "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). What mercy, what comfort, what an immense blessing leads back to the fulfillment of the divine promises!

It must be stressed that God's promises rest on certain conditions. Even the promise of our eternal salvation is included here. God's Word requires faith, recognition of sin, acknowledgement of Christ as Lord, repentance, reconciliation with God, obedience, and so on. Jesus said: "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:28). Matthew 5:8 reads: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Those who believe this may expect the fulfillment of divine promises, as well as their eternal blessing. ■



# “Only Speak a Word”

*“And Jesus said to him, ‘I will come and heal him.’ The centurion answered and said, ‘Lord I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.’” (Matthew 8:7-8)*

Jesus had finished His mighty Sermon on the Mount and gone down from the mountaintop with His disciples. As always, many people followed Him and desired His help. Matthew records that along the road He traveled, a leprous man called out to Him. Jesus stretched out His hand, touched him, and healed him. Eventually, He and His disciples arrived at the gates to Capernaum. Even here, someone came towards Him seeking His help, the centurion from Capernaum. Jesus, even though He was tired from His travels, was immediately available to help Him and said: “I will come and heal him.”

Oh, the wonderful word of the Lord! How this encourages even my soul today: “I will come.” Even now He is willing to come and help wherever His help is needed. He stands before His Father’s throne and is our advocate. If He would not do that anymore, we would be finished. The kingly High Priest is still fulfilling His calling and is the same today as He was here on earth! His loving heart is open for all mankind, and His arms are open to help and to save! “I will come”!

The centurion, caught off guard by this mercy, unexpectedly saw that this was more than human—it was a godly compassion! If he still had doubts about this Jesus from Nazareth, he now saw that He was more than a prophet who can do miracles. He saw His splendor, that He really was the Messiah, the Son of God! In this splendor, his own unworthiness became huge before his eyes and humbly he called out: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof” (Matthew 8:8). However, through this awareness, his faith became strong beyond belief: “but only speak a word” (Matthew 8:8).

Only a word from the Almighty is needed. He needn’t personally appear, as a human does. No, “only speak a word”! The faith of the centurion grasped the grace of God and expected that which is humanly impossible.

Dear Reader, even you may have such an encounter with Jesus! He wants to help you in whatever need you have. In His Word, the wonderful “I will” shines towards you. He is waiting for you!

He preaches to many, He heals some, but you He wants to meet! He knows your needs and is on the way to the gate of your city to specifically help you! Do you not want to rush towards Him? Who are you, that you in your pride come across as a centurion, but are poor and in need of help?

See, Jesus is coming to you. He loves you and is coming to help you! Oh, let this merciful love melt your pride, your doubts, and your second thoughts in the knowledge that: “I am not worthy that you care about my messed up life!”

Acknowledge your unworthiness to this unbounded godly love that nevertheless comes to help you. Let your faith rise above your reason to the God of love, who makes the impossible possible. Let Him deal with your need, be it spiritual or physical. Believe that it is only a small thing to help you, and call to Him: “Only speak a word”!

Dear Reader, this life is our only time for preparation. How do you want to spend eternity? In respect to the end of time, God’s Word says: “he who is filthy, let him be filthy still . . . he who is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly . . . to give to every one according to his work” (Revelation 22:11-12). ■



## God's Promises

**H**ow often do people make a promise which they do not keep? Maybe they forgot what they had promised, or they are now unable to fulfill it. However, God never forgets what He has promised, and He is always able to fulfill His promises. His word is unshakable; "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). He is able to fulfill everything He has promised because He is the Almighty God (see Genesis 17:1). Nothing is too difficult or impossible for Him. Jesus said: "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). God has "given to us exceedingly great and precious promises" (2 Peter 1:4).

I find that often we do not appreciate and consider the promises of God worthy. How often do we thank the Lord for His many marvelous promises? How often do we ponder them? In the Bible, we have promises that apply to all of life's situations and can be accessed in all circumstances. He has promised to fulfill all our needs according to riches in glory (see Philippians 4:19). He has supplied us with all that is necessary to live and to lead a god-fearing life. You "open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing" (Psalm 145:16). Praise and honor be to His holy name!

Shortly before his death, Joshua said to the people of Israel: "You know in all your hearts and in all your souls that no one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed" (Joshua 23:14). Is this not a wonderful statement? The children of Israel could not deny this. They had to acknowledge

that this was what had happened. Likewise, Solomon said: "Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promises, which He promised through His servant Moses" (1 Kings 8:56). Even we have to admit that He has fulfilled each promise given to us in the Bible, if we believe and follow His commandments. We must never forget that all God's promises are dependent on us meeting specific stipulations. We cannot appropriate God's promises without fulfilling His stipulations. We must always do our part by believing God's promises, following God's Word, placing our trust in Him, and doing what He said. We need to obey Him totally. If we do that, we can be assured that God will fulfill His promises to us.

We must also remember that God will not only fulfill His promises but also His warnings. Punishment and recompense for evil will also occur, just as the good He promised. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay" (Romans 12:19). "God is not mocked" (Galatians 6:7). If He threatens the sinner with punishment, He will fulfill His word, just as He fulfills His promises to His own. No human will escape the judgment of God and His verdict (see Romans 2:1-11). He will not let the guilty go free.

Will the promises of the Lord ever end? No, never. They will stand in eternity. "For all the promises of God in Him are yes and in Him Amen to the glory of God through us" (2 Corinthians 1:20). "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny himself" (2 Timothy 2:13). ■

E. K.



## Yes, But

**S**urely you have often encountered the words “yes, but” in your life, for example, when someone responded with these words to a statement you made. Maybe you really liked a certain song and someone else said, “Yes, but it was way too fast for me.” Or it may have been a meal that you really enjoyed, and someone might have said, “Yes, but I would leave out the onions.” It sounds like a confirmation but is in the true sense a contradiction.

In my life, I have heard many a “yes, but” from the spiritual adversary and, regrettably, I have often paid too much attention to it. For example, there is the fact that God has forgiven my sins, but the devil tells me that as a Christian, I should never have the character that I have. So he says, for example, “Yes, you may think that you are a Christian, but do you really think that as a Christian you would have the temptations that you have? Look at your life; you can never be a Christian. You struggle, you try your best, you want to live properly, but as a Christian you have to be completely different.”

In Colossians 2:14-15, it says that Jesus wiped away our guilt and that He left it on the cross and thus triumphed. Wait a minute, what does it say? He triumphed? Yes, but He hung on the cross. He died. He lost! Imagine that someone told the disciples that Jesus was triumphant when He was hanging on the cross. What do you think they would have answered? They would probably laugh at that person and tell them to open their eyes and realize that everything is over. We know today that was not the case. The apparent “end” was in reality a triumph that ended with the words: “It is finished!” Humanly speak-

ing, I would respond to the biblical Word in Colossians with the words, “Yes, but Jesus died.” However, if you look at it from the divine perspective, you can see the most victorious triumph in human history.

Maybe there are a lot of “yes, but” arguments by the twister of truth (the devil) in your life. Yes, but you are not spiritual enough! Yes, but look at your defeats! Yes, but you do not pray enough! Yes, but you should have been eating “solid food” for a long time already and are still drinking milk! Yes, but God does not love you the way He loves others! Yes, but you do not have the proper gifts for the kingdom of God!

I know many such arguments and also know where they have taken me: namely, to a dead end and, as we all know, there is no way out of a dead end. The goal of these arguments is to bring you to despair and take away all your faith. In the end, you stand there, the picture of misery, not knowing how to continue. The answer is that there is no “but.” At least not when it comes to the Word of God and, more precisely, when it comes to promises that God wants to reveal to you. You probably learned this as a child in the song: “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” Now is the time for you to believe these words. Do not engage in any “yes, but,” rather, ask yourself where God has hidden His exclamation point in the Bible for you. For God loved you so much (!) that He gave His son for you (!), that you would be saved (!)—and no “buts” (paraphrased from John 3:16)! ■

Eduard Grötzingler  
Eppingen, Germany

## VERSE OF THE MONTH

***“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Mark 14:38)***

Surely, as a young Christian, you know the battle against temptation. None of us is spared. Temptations are very different and multifaceted.

Temptation is not immediately a sin, but can lead to it—and therein lies the danger. As Christians, we easily avoid sin but often do not recognize the danger of temptation. Often, at first, it seems very harmless and alluring. Sometimes there are seemingly “good” arguments in favor of temptation. But when we give in, we get into things that we really did not want to and that harm us afterwards.

Therefore, if a voice warns you, do not disobey and do not contemplate for long, but flee, resist, fight! Do not be indifferent to the warning just because the matter has become “normal” to you, but be decisive! You do not need to fight alone or in your own strength. You may flee in prayer to Jesus, who was Himself tempted and understands you very well. He can and wants to help you. Remember: there is no victory without a battle!

## Lessons From School (7)

When I was starting my studies, I became fascinated by histology, which deals with the microanatomy of tissues. I enjoyed sitting at the microscope and discovering this whole different world that God placed in even the tiniest structures and that cannot be seen with the naked eye. However, there was a catch: We had to sketch out the cell junctions.

Despite my limited artistic talents, I still enjoyed the drawing portion. At the end of the course, we had to present our portfolios to the professors for evaluation. Mine eventually landed on the desk of a professor who had a reputation for being unreasonable. She would mark her corrections in red ink, directly on the drawings, forcing us to start fresh each time rather than simply erasing the mistakes—and every time we submitted the improved version, she found more errors to correct. This meant that the drawings could take weeks to finish.

She tried everyone’s patience, and I was quite put out that my portfolio had ended up with her, of all people. I went to collect my portfolio with little hope of escaping unscathed, but to my great surprise, I noticed that she had not written on my drawings but rather stuck a sticky note with a single question neatly in the margins. As it turned out, it concerned a labeling error on my part. However, I didn’t entirely trust this change, knowing as well as I did her tendency to make corrections in installments. I resubmitted the portfolio to her, and as I was watching, she leafed through it and asked, “Do you have a pen I could use?” I practically ran to get one and with it the signature I needed before she changed her mind.

Had I misjudged her? Probably not. She was rarely friendly, regularly reduced students to tears with her tests, and set up her exams so that relatively few people passed on the first try. It must have been as Proverbs 21: “In God’s hand, the heart is like rivers of water, and He turns it however He wishes.” In this case, He turned it in my favor to save me the extra work. ■

Corinna Kowalski,  
Hamm, Germany

# “I Will Help You!”

**K**iara had become a Christian and was trying very hard to follow the Lord. She prayed, read the Bible, and tried to put what she read into action. Nevertheless, it did not seem like she could truly be happy.

She went to her Sunday School teacher with this trouble. She told her, “There is no hope for me. I have tried everything to be really happy. All my Bible reading and effort is in vain.”

“Do you believe that the Lord Jesus died on the cross for you?” the teacher asked, “and that He bore your sins?” “Yes, I certainly believe that,” was her reply.

“What would you do if the Lord Jesus were still here on earth?” the teacher continued. “I would go straight to Him and ask Him to take away my doubts and really make me happy.” “And what do you think would be His answer?” But Kiara did not know what to answer, though she seemed to be thinking intently, until the teacher repeated: “Well, Kiara, what would the Lord Jesus answer?”

For quite a while, she sat thoughtfully. But then a ray of joy passed over her face, and she answered: “He would say: ‘Fear not, I will help you!’” It had become clear to her how foolish she had been, that she had completely ignored the Lord Jesus by only being busy with her own doings and doubting His love.

Whenever doubt began to rise in her heart, she remembered the question that the Sunday School teacher had asked her. She learned to include the Lord Jesus in all her concerns. How happy Kiara became when her thoughts were turned away from herself and her own actions and directed onto the love of the Lord Jesus! The beautiful verses of a Sunday School song became valuable to her for her future life:

As long as my Lord lives,  
He strength and power gives.  
All fear and trouble soon must flee;  
My heart at rest will be.

If my foot ever slides,  
All pleasure I'm denied,  
I hurry to my Lord in prayer;  
He heals my every care.

I look alone to Him  
In whom I always win!  
My Jesus loves me this I know;  
To paradise I'll go!



# Experiences with God

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits” (Psalms 103:2).*

During the past few days, I felt God nudging me to write a testimony, and now I want to heed that admonition.

At the end of October 2017, I developed a sharp pain in my abdomen that stretched from my left side across to the right side. It became so serious that I needed to call an emergency physician, since it was a holiday. He anticipated that it was a gallstone making itself known. He gave me some pain-killers and said that if it didn't get better, I should call him that evening and then be transferred into the hospital. My prayer, however, was: “Lord, I don't want to be hospitalized. Lord, You can help me.” A few days later, I had an appointment with my family doctor. By means of an ultrasound, it was determined that I indeed had a gallstone and that my gallbladder was very infected and enlarged. On account of my gallbladder and liver, my blood counts were very poor, and he feared that I had a very serious infection. After three weeks, I was scheduled for an MRI. I continually prayed to God: “Lord, help me! You be my physician!” The result of the MRI was so favorable that no infection was to be seen anymore.

Now, I do have to be careful of what I eat, but thanks be to God that He heard my prayers. Several brothers and sisters also prayed for me, may our faithful God richly reward them. It is my wish and prayer to remain faithful to the end of my life and then be with Him in that wonderful home.

Let us remain faithful; it is worth it.

Your fellow pilgrim to our eternal home, ■

*Adina Heldt  
Herford, Germany*

## Announcements

*Fest in Chilliwack, BC*

August 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019

*Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany*

August 17<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019

*Convention in Swartz Creek, Michigan*

August 31<sup>st</sup> - September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019

*Fest in Edmonton, Alberta*

October 12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019



# On the Road of Salvation

Part 7

*The Fiery Poison of Sin*

Ron Taron

## *God's Plan of Salvation in the History of Israel*

“Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.’ So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, ‘We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.’ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived” (Numbers 21:4-9).

Israel had once again sinned against God. They had come to the borders of the land of Edom and thought that the rigors of travelling through the desert were now ended. But the Edomites refused to let them pass through their land, and Israel had to turn back into the desert. On top of that, Aaron, their High Priest, had to die without reaching the Promised Land. Many Israelites would have thought: “We’re all going to die here in the desert!” Our text shows us that the soul of the people became very discouraged. And then they sinned against God again. “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? Life is so hard here, and our soul loathes this manna that You feed us!” How could it have come to this?

God reacted strongly to their sin and sent fiery serpents among them. Many Israelites had to die, and suddenly they woke up to what they had done: “We have

sinned”! Sadly, Israel initially felt justified in having their sinful attitude! That is how Satan, the enemy of our soul, that poisonous snake, works. That’s how he began with Eve in the Garden of Eden. “Listen, God is keeping something from you that you actually deserve! He doesn’t allow you to have what you desire! If you eat from this tree, you’ll be like God!”

And that’s how he continues to work to this day: “You can do it once . . . you deserve to have it! Reach out and experience what the world has to offer! You need something more than always this same old, dry manna! A whole world of pleasure lies within your grasp, and if need be, you can enjoy it online in a virtual way! No one need ever know!”

### **Is Sin Harmless?**

If one considers the opinion of the world, and worse, the attitude of today’s Christians, it would almost seem so! Every worldly pleasure seems to lie within the right of today’s Christian, from alcohol consumption to every type of worldly media, from judicious lies to sexual wantonness, from the idols of fashion and sports to the addictions of pleasure and affluence, and the list goes on. It has become difficult to observe a difference between Christians and the world. Dear readers: does this apply to us as well? Are we incrementally slipping into the same state? Will God just close an eye to our spiritual bankruptcy? Are all of those things just harmless, just a part of today’s Christianity? When the phrase “times have changed” is repeatedly used as justification in the ranks of the Church of God, does that mean that God has truly changed His standard of holiness?

When, long ago, Israel complained against Moses (although they were actually accusing God), the Lord re-



sponded immediately with tragic consequences: He sent fiery serpents among them and many, many died in their sin. What was their sin? They wanted to return to Egypt! They didn't want such a "narrow," confining path through the desert. Somehow, the Bread of Heaven that came from God and was so sweet and nourishing, could not satisfy them anymore! We ask again, how did it come to this?

### **The Path Leading to Sin**

The Israelites turned their eyes from God. A songwriter describes the opposite:

"Look away, O my heart, from the things of the world.  
Look away to the things eternal.  
For the things of our time, they will all pass away,  
But Christ's treasures, they are supernal.  
Look away, look away  
From the things of the world to Jesus!"

For many Christians there is great danger that they will not heed that plea and will be distracted by the glitter of the world. Israel looked at the hardships of the desert, their troubles, disappointments and discouragement, and then the imagined joys of Egypt. The desires of their flesh were somehow not being satisfied on the "Way of Holiness," and so they sinned. Dear Christian: if you want to overcome in the battle for your soul, then look away, look away from the things of this world, to Jesus!

It is easy to recognize that the Israelite's love to God had waned. As long as man remains overwhelmed by God's love, and returns it, he will not need the world's substitutes. Yet there is great danger here for all of us! Paul writes in Romans 5:5 that the love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who is given to us.

As long as this fire of God burns in our hearts, as long as we truly love God above all else, we will not fall into sin. And sin will not seem harmless to us, but rather terrible and sinful! Dear Christian: constantly ensure that you remain in a state of first love toward God. Where that is no longer the case, repent and ask God to fill your heart with burning love toward Him. And if you have never yet experienced entire sanctification, pray that God will send His Holy Spirit upon you with holy and sanctifying fire!

### **The Fiery Poison of Sin**

God's Word is very clear on the fact sin has terrible consequences, regardless if man accepts that or not. I remember clearly how after hearing a message on sin, a young lady said to me: "You don't mean that God would condemn me to hell for one sin!" What does God's Word say? "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). "But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" (Revelation 21:27). Many, many scriptures could be added here, but one thing is clear: sin will not enter heaven!

But sin does not only have eternal consequences. It already ruins man and his future in this life. How much trouble, misery, heartbreak, worry, broken families, and much more has sin caused in the lives of people! If you allow sin a foothold in your life, you too will experience its fiery poison. But thanks be to God, we too have a "bronze serpent," an antidote for sin, and He is called Jesus Christ! His sacrificial death on the cross and His holy blood are the atonement for all sin and eternal death. "He who has the Son has life" (1 John 5:12). Look to Him and live! ■

# Do You Have Your *Passport* to *Heaven*?

A few years ago, I had an experience at the border between Canada and the United States that I will remember for a long time. I had forgotten my passport, and now I had to wait in the border town for someone to bring it.

While I was waiting, I kept thinking about how horrible it will be for people trying to enter the gates of heaven and discovering that they have no “passport” to heaven—no entry permit for that world of eternal salvation.

Jesus once said to Nicodemus, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). He makes it clear that being born again is absolutely necessary to enter heaven.

It is said that someone once asked John Wesley why he preached so often about being born again. He answered, “Because you need to be born again!”

When I was stopped at the border, I came up with all sorts of reasons to convince the guards that I urgently needed to get across. But they said, “You need a passport!”

If you, dear reader, get to the gates of heaven without the passport

of new birth, it will not be at all difficult for you to convince the heavenly border guards that you absolutely need entry into heaven to avoid eternal damnation. However, just as the border guards did not let me through without my passport, entry into heaven without the passport of new birth is not possible. It is a serious and exceedingly horrible thing to be excluded from heaven. That is why it is so important to make the necessary preparations—right now! “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

All my assurances that I did indeed own a passport were not enough for the border guard. He insisted, “You need to have your passport with you before we can let you in.”

What an important lesson for us, dear reader. We can have all sorts of documentation, for example a certificate from church authorities that we were good church members, and so forth. However, what really matters is experiencing new birth. Anyone who is not born again will not be allowed into heaven.

Just as I wished that I had not forgotten my passport that day at the border, countless lost souls will wail

in damnation, “I wish I hadn’t put off the most important things that long!” But no amount of regret will make a difference because the time of grace will be over and all opportunities along with it. Do not put your rebirth off any longer!

We become children of God by being born again. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12). Would you not like to turn to the Lord in His glory and ask Him humbly, with faith and repentance, to enter your heart and your life? If you ask Him with all your heart, He will grant your plea.

I could have saved myself this entire unpleasant experience by taking my preparations for the trip just a little more seriously. This is the same problem so many people have when it comes to being born again. They put off repentance and conversion for too long—and one day, it is suddenly too late. Procrastination is a dangerous thing if the salvation of your soul is at stake.

Before this experience at the border, I had often crossed without any issues whatsoever. I knew that crossing the border was not as easy as it used to be, but I thought they would give me a little leeway because I had





already crossed so often. How wrong I was!

So many people hold a false hope, believing that they will one day enter heaven despite not having any assurance of salvation. They say, “I hope I will be saved—I hope to get to heaven!” Often, they also sing, “Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!” But they do not have the assurance of having passed from death to life (see 1 John 3:14).

Do not, dear reader, content yourself with mere hope! All of my false hope went up in smoke when the border guard said to me, “You need to have a passport before we can let you cross.”

And so, I cannot warn you urgently enough: Do not succumb to

mere hope! Take it seriously and assure yourself of your salvation! If you fail to do so, you will one day experience a most dreadful disappointment.

## “I wish I hadn’t put off the most important things that long!”

Now comes the best part of my experience at the border: When I finally had my passport in hand, I was able to confidently walk up to the guard, show my passport, and cross

the border without a problem. The obstacles had been removed, and with nothing left to stop me, I joyfully went on my way.

The same holds true in our spiritual lives. If we have the assurance of new life, we do not need to be afraid to meet God. When we arrive at the gates of heaven, we will hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:23). Do not remain in uncertainty! Take this opportunity today to make sure that you have your passport to heaven! ■

H. C. Gardner



STORY

# God's Leading

Cesar Malan (1787-1864) was a minister in Geneva. He wrote the lyrics of several spiritual hymns and also composed the melody of the well-known song, "Wait on God, and trust Him."

One day, he was walking with his son through the Canton of Bern. Tired from the long trek, the two of them stepped into an inn to sleep overnight. Before the innkeeper left to prepare the room, Malan said in a friendly way to her: "Dear woman, call your household together before bedtime so that we can read God's Word together and pray."

"That would be a fine thing!" exclaimed the woman sarcastically. "We have many better things to do here than to pray and read the Bible!"

"Then farewell!" replied Malan. "I cannot stay under a roof where prayer does not occur. For on such a roof rests no blessing from God." Turning to his son, he asked: "Can you still walk another hour?"

When he said yes, the two of them walked to the next village, although it was already late. At the guesthouse where the tired wanderers entered, a different spirit reigned. With joy and thankfulness, the innkeepers accepted the offer of the minister to teach them from the Word of God and to refresh them.

"Oh," the friendly woman later said, "if only several others in the village who love the Lord Jesus could also have been strengthened in their faith!" Malan, who was attuned to the nudging of the Lord, went wherever the Spirit of the Lord sent him and did not hesitate to seek out the scattered children of God.

In a house at the edge of the village, he was told of an old, devout man who lay on his death bed high in the

mountains and was waiting daily for the coming of the Lord. "Please visit him. He rarely gets visitors who can talk to him about the kingdom of God."

"If someone can show us the way, we will go," said Malan.

The pathway that he took in the name of the Lord was not too long for him. In the house on the mountain, they found an old man who was dying, and his yearning to be home with the Lord was visibly written on his face. They talked about God's peace, and the minister asked him how he had found it.

He answered: "God drew me to Him in a wondrous way. And the songs of Cesar Malan were a great blessing to me. I have much reason to thank this man. God has heard all of my prayers except for one which I have asked of Him for years. May He let me see the face of this man once in this lifetime. Now I lie on my death bed and will never make it to Geneva."

The visitor was deeply moved. Then he said quietly: "I'm from Geneva and know Cesar Malan."

"You know him!" asked the dying man happily. "Oh, tell me what he looks like. What is his character like, and how are his sermons?"

Very quietly, the minister said: "If he were here, he would kneel down like me and pray with you."

Already he was on his knees and prayed fervently for the dying man. Then the praying man stood up, shook the hand of the smiling man in farewell, and said: "Dear friend, God has even heard this prayer of yours and sent Cesar Malan to you. God led me on this journey so that I had to come to you. Praise God for His wonderful leading!" ■

# Experiences With God

## It happened during the war . . . .

**A**fter being displaced from our home in the Caucasus, my family was forced to resettle in Kazakhstan in October 1941. My father, like all German men during the war years, had to enlist in the labor army (Trudarmija) two days after my birth. My mother was able to stay with her three children. In order to survive, she had to work from dawn to dusk. In the evening, she brought bread along, but the portion was so meager that she had to decide every time how to fairly distribute it between us children and herself, for she had to work and was just as hungry as we were.

At our accommodation, we had a table that had a beam fastened at the bottom between its legs for stability. On one of the benches was a little seat for me. I had been born as a healthy child. On one unfortunate morning when I was 9 months old, I slipped down from the chair and fell underneath the table with my head on the floor and my back on the beam. My mother picked me up, crying, and took me as well as both of my sisters (age 3 and 5) to the nursery. She had to hurry to work, for there was no way to avoid it. In the nursery, I cried a lot because of the pain. In order to quiet me, the older children swung me so hard that I fell out of my swing, and the swing fell on my back. My oldest sister was there and saw everything. I screamed loudly. In one day, I had to suffer two tumbles. As a result, I had a concussion, and a bump had formed on my back. Because of the pain, I could no longer cry but moaned day and night. My mother had to go to work every day, and my sisters and I, a seriously ill child, had to go to the nursery. There was no medical help for me, since all doctors were at the front. I took my first steps at the age of 5.

In 1946, we were allowed to go to our father in Southern Ural.

As a consequence of the double tumble, I had severe scoliosis. Someone who has scoliosis has a spine that is curved and bent three-dimensionally. On the left side of my back, a pointed bump formed, and the front side of my chest lifted higher. My brain developed slower than my peers of the same age. The area where we lived had no school for disabled children, and so I had to attend regular school. Learning was so difficult for me that I had to repeat the fifth grade three times. I only completed the seven-year high school program.

When I was 13 or 15 years old, my classroom teacher advised my parents to take me to the doctor to be examined, which they did. The doctors advised a surgical route. Several operations would have to be done, and I would have to rely on crutches. I had a weak heart. For this reason, my father turned down the advice of the doctors. I had cried many tears over my disability, and my parents had a lot of worries concerning me.

When I was older, I took a sewing course. I also wanted to work like all others. When I was 22 years old, the head of the local garment factory had to employ me, upon order of the district administrator's office. In total, I worked 27 long years.

My parents were born-again Christians and belonged to the Church of God. They took everything in their lives out of God's hands, even my disability and illness. They prayed for me and pleaded with God for help.

Small house services often took place in our home. After several years, Brother Alfred Lamparter, one of the elders of the Church of God visited us. I was anointed and prayed for according to James 5. Gradually, my chest became smaller until it was a normal size. The bump became smaller and rounder. I became bigger; my body length was now 1.35 m. My feet became healthy, and I had a faster stride. Even my mind had developed well.

The Lord gave me so much health that I could help my mother care for my father and later care for my mother herself around the clock all by myself for several years.

A few people can still remember how miserable I looked in my childhood. Now I am already 76 years old. I have written this with God's help and to His glory. God has done great things for me. I bring my precious Lord all praise, glory, and honor, for He has forgiven my sins and made me His child. If I do not mention His deeds, then the stones must cry out. He alone is worthy of all honor and worship!

"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies" (Psalm 103:1-4). ■

Nelli Gutbrot  
Germany

# God's Promises

*In life's disappointments, in sorrow and need,  
This promise of God is my comfort indeed:  
"Though mountains depart and the hills be removed,  
My kindness and peace, they will never leave you."*

*If doubts would assail me and make me distraught,  
I hear the sweet voice of my Savior and God:  
"Whoever comes to Me I will not cast out;  
There is a place for him in My Father's house."*

*And is the path hidden, the future so dim,  
Although you are weary, just listen to Him:  
"Oh, I am the way, and the truth, and the life."  
For Christ calms the storm amidst turmoil and strife.*

*And do your temptations seem tiring and long?  
Remember, in heaven you'll join in a song:  
"He who overcomes will inherit all things.  
A crown is awaiting that's fit for a king."*

*The Word of the Lord is a light on my way,  
My comfort, my refuge, my strength every day.  
My heart looks to Jesus, my hope's not in vain;  
"In Him are all promises, yes and amen."*