

owed the plan of redemption, but not the ten commandment moral law.

His Time in the New Covenant

Concerning the new covenant, the Scriptures say: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:” (Heb 8:10). Now we obey God’s law from the heart. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2Cor 5:17). What a wonderful promise!

How does He make us new creatures? Answer—By beholding Him we are changed (See 2Cor 3:18). The time spent with God (especially on the Sabbath), “beholding” Him, resting from our own works, enables Him to create this change in us, and He has made it a sign. “Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.” “And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God” (Eze 20:12, 20).

The Ten Commandments, written with the finger of God on tables of stone are expressive of the whole duty of man to God and of man to man. In them is summed up the two golden principles: Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and love thy neighbor as thyself. We cannot love our neighbor as ourselves and steal and kill, without breaking the last six of the commandments. Neither can we love God with all our hearts, without observing the first four commandments, including the fourth, which requires us to set apart the time that He has asked us to spend with Him.

Jesus’ Coming

One more wonderful gift we must mention is Jesus’ promise to return personally: “. . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that

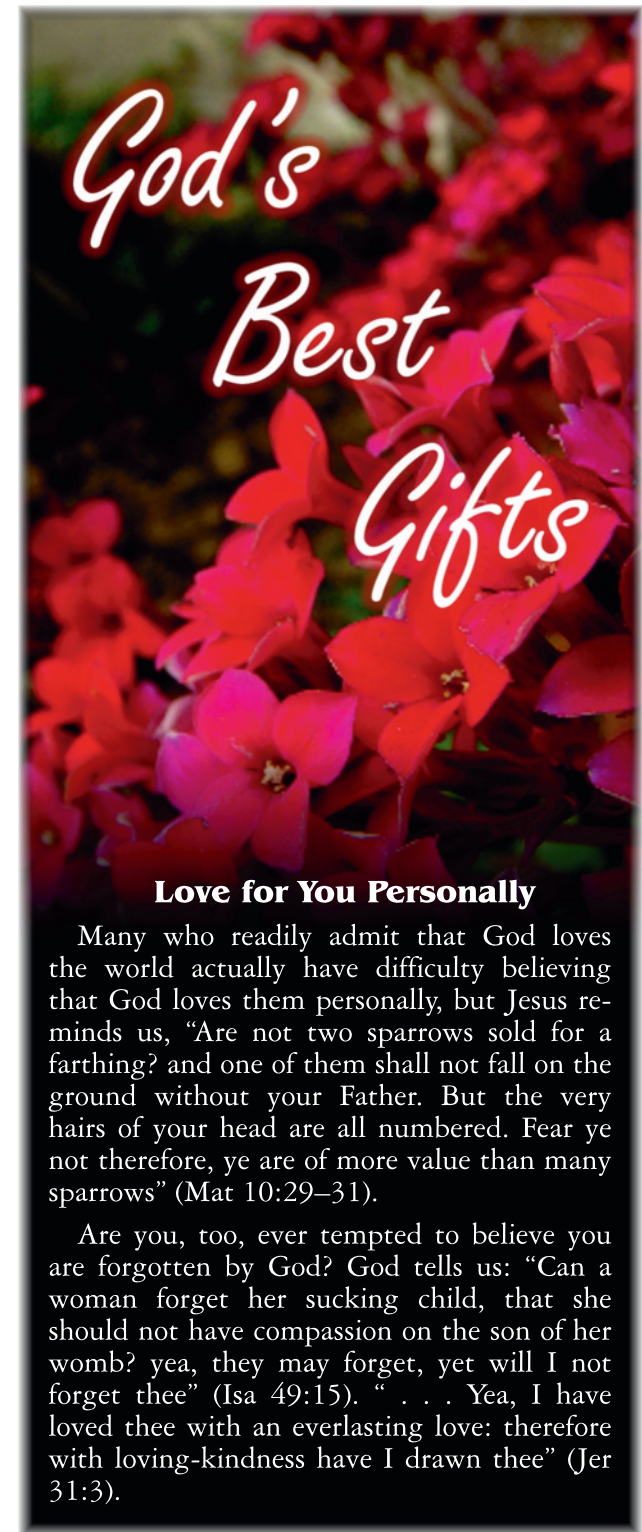
where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn 14:3). However, Jesus has warned us of “false christs,” that would “shew great signs and wonders; in-somuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Mat 24:24). He has clearly revealed the manner of His coming, that we be not deceived:

1. It will be clearly visible. “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Mat 24:27). “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Rev 1:7). 2. There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. (See Mat 24:29–31.) 3. He will come from heaven in power and great glory. (See Luk 21:26, 27.) 4. Jesus does not touch the earth at this time, but the faithful dead will be raised to life, and, with the living faithful, will meet Jesus in the air to ever be with him. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1Thess 4:16, 17).

Dear reader, in view of these wonderful gifts, won’t you acknowledge our heavenly Father’s love, acknowledge our Creator as your God, and give Him your heart?

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**God's
Best
Gifts**

Love for You Personally

Many who readily admit that God loves the world actually have difficulty believing that God loves them personally, but Jesus reminds us, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Mat 10:29–31).

Are you, too, ever tempted to believe you are forgotten by God? God tells us: “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee” (Isa 49:15). “. . . Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee” (Jer 31:3).

God's Love on Trial

It is this same loving God who is also the supreme judge, and His love makes Him a just judge. We ought to appreciate a judge who is just, no respecter of persons, who neither accepts a bribe, nor pardons crime for pay, and whose justice requires equal punishment for all.

Sin is the transgression of the (God's) law, (1Jo 3:4) and a little sin in the life, like leaven, ". . . leaveneth the whole lump" Gal 5:9. The sin of selfishness in a little thing like snatching a toy from a playmate, may be manifest later in life as dishonesty in business or politics, or even transforming someone into a Hitler. Sin therefore, however small, cannot be overlooked by a just God. God has made a way to remove the love of sin from us to keep us from sinning, but to those who will not relinquish their sins, divine love, no less than divine justice, pronounces that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23).

Death, not eternal torment, is the "wages of sin". God has spoken of a time when the wicked will be completely destroyed, "And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts" (Mal 4:3). The ancient city of Sodom suffered "the vengeance (justice – Grk.) of eternal fire" (Jude 7), yet it is not burning today. The fire was eternal, because it could not be extinguished until it had consumed all its fuel. It's the results, not the fire, which are eternal and everlasting. So it is with all who will suffer justice in the lake of fire. The words "eternal," "for ever," "everlasting," and similar terms in the original languages of the Bible do not mean without end, but simply express an unmeasured duration. Hannah said she would take Samuel to Shiloh to "there abide for ever" (1Sa 1:22), but he did not even live there throughout his lifetime; Achish said of David, "therefore he shall be my servant for ever" (1Sa 27:12), meaning while David was alive. There are numerous similar usages in the Bible. Keep this fact in mind the next time you read or hear that the judgment or torment of the unrepentant in the lake of fire is "for ever". Neither God's love nor His justice could allow Him to torment people for

ever for the sins of one brief life on this earth. Immortality is only granted to the repentant through the provisions of the Gospel (Rom 6:23; 2Tim 1:10), and is given at the second coming of Christ (1Cor 15:50-54). It is not something possessed by the unrepentant, which keeps them alive to endure eternal suffering in hellfire.

Forgiveness and Life in His Son

The one gift that surpasses every other and reveals God's love for us to the greatest extent is God's gift of His Son. When God's dearly beloved Son volunteered to become one with fallen mortal man that he might take back the dominion Adam forfeited and redeem the race, God's heart was torn. Should He let man perish, or should he allow His only begotten Son to suffer and die to save guilty man? It was a fearful struggle, but the results of that decision have been published far and wide. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn 3:16). No matter how sinful our life has been, He assures us: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1Jn 1:9). God requires that we confess our sins, and humble our hearts before Him, but at the same time we should have confidence in Him as a compassionate Father, who will not forsake those who put their trust in Him. We dishonor God by distrusting His promises. "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear" (Isa 59:1). "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isa 43:1).

His Time

Loving parents can never make gifts take the place of time spent with their children. Even before sin caused separation, and we needed a Savior, our Heavenly Father rested from His labor, and



gave us His time. He created one whole day of each week for the purpose of spending time with us. "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Gen 2:3). Remembering this memorial of God's creative power inspires in us love, gratitude, and faith in His power to re-create us into His likeness. What would become of the memorial of our nation's independence if it were left up to each person to decide when to observe it? God did not leave it up to us to decide a convenient time to observe the memorial of creation. He specified the day of the week to be observed by man, the seventh day, Saturday. (Note: The memorials of Jesus' death and resurrection are the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, not a day of the week. See Rom 6:3, 4; 1Cor 11:23–27.)

God is the giver of the gift of the Sabbath, and therefore, is the only one with authority to change or discontinue its observance; yet even He cannot change the day in history in which He rested from creating this earth. Any change in this memorial would give it an entirely new meaning, and would be definitely stated in the Scriptures, but the Scriptures records no such change. Jesus testifies, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill [observe]. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Mat 5:17, 18). Paul adds these words, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom 3:31). Why then do some Scriptures seem to indicate that the law was done away with by the death of Christ (e.g., Col 2:14–17)? Their contexts, when prayerfully and carefully considered, clearly indicate that they are talking about the laws which foreshadowed the first and second coming of Christ, not the moral law of the Ten Commandments. The "new covenant" made obsolete the laws concerning the various feasts, sacrifices, and certain rests or observances called sabbaths, which originated after sin, and foreshad-