

God's Remembering & Forgetting

Remembering can be defined as ...

1. **To recall or bring back to mind** — To have or keep an image, idea, or memory of something or someone from the past in one's consciousness.
 - Example: "I remember Ernie's warm smile."
2. **To retain in memory** — To keep information, facts, or experiences stored in one's mind.
 - Example: "Do you remember the scriptures used in Ernie's last Bible quiz"
3. **To not forget** — To keep something in mind as something to be done or considered.
 - Example: "Remember to bring the special foods for the service today."

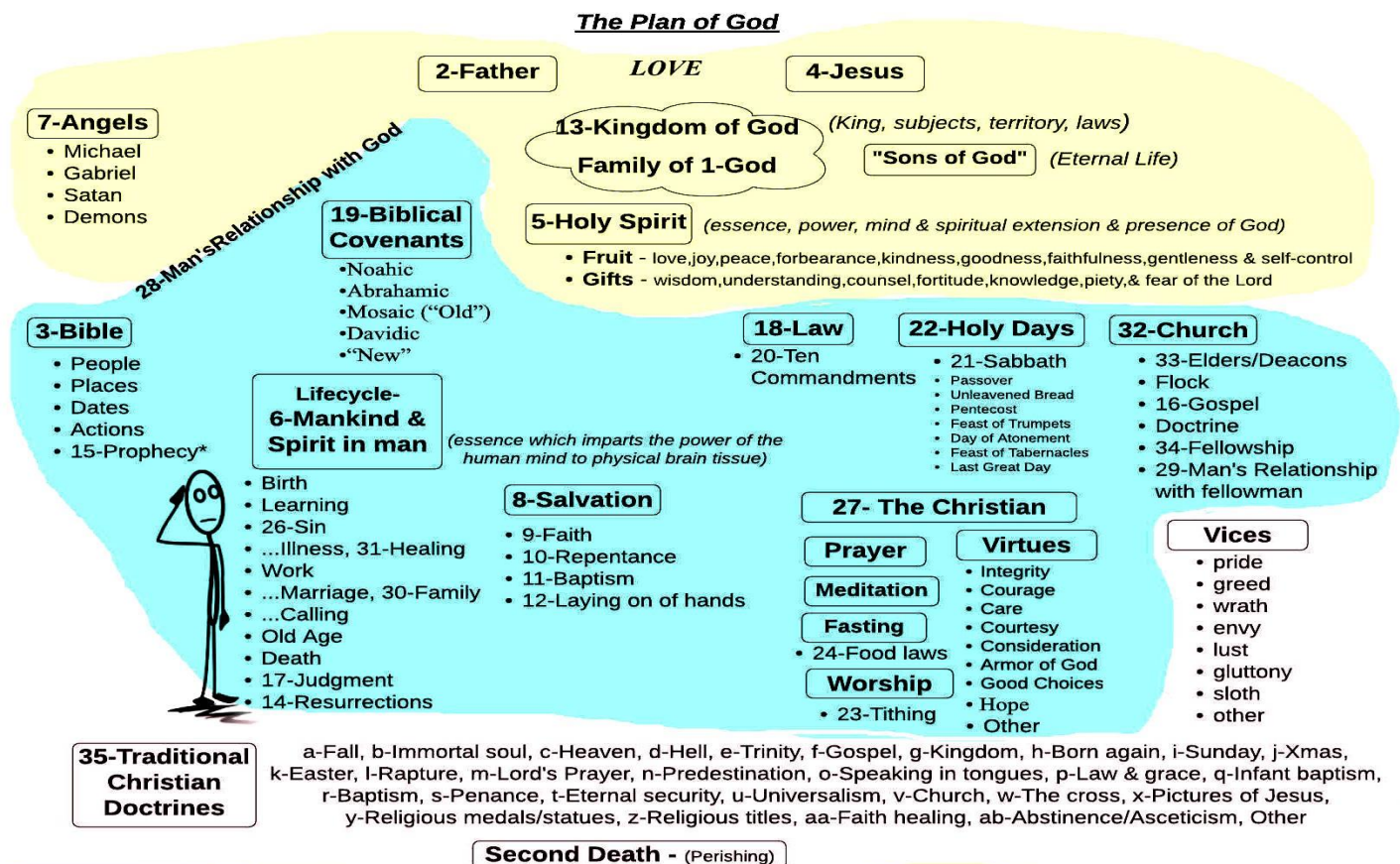
Extended Meaning ...

To commemorate or honour — To hold a memorial or observance for; to keep alive the memory of someone or something.

- Example: "We gather to remember Ernie who died while in faithful service to the church... in worship leading, greeting visitors, & pouring over scriptures to create thoughtful Bible quizzes each week."

Today, we'll seek to gain insights about God & about ourselves by exploring

- what God chooses to remember & forget
- what we are encouraged in scripture to remember & forget ... and
- in honour of Ernie's memorial ... some things **we** might choose to remember as we consider a brother in the faith who has died.



Time: (Past - History - Creation, 25-Hebrew Calendar ... Present - (World events) ... (Future - 15-Prophecy*) ... Eternity ...)

In the Bible, the concepts of God "remembering" & "forgetting" do not refer to a slip of human memory or amnesia.

We understand God is **omniscient (all-knowing)**

1 John 3:20 ...for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything

Psalms 147:5 ...His understanding is beyond measure

Psalms 139:1–4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it

These terms "remembering" & "forgetting" are describing our relationship with God & His justice:

- when God **remembers**, He acts on a previous promise or "takes note" of a condition
- when He **forgets**, He chooses to no longer hold an action against someone or He legally strikes it from the record

In scripture, here are some **"categories" of things God remembers**

...

1. His Covenants & Promises

This is the most frequent use of "remember" regarding God. It signifies Him actively fulfilling a pledge He made to humanity.

- **The Abrahamic/Mosaic Covenants ...**

Exo 2:24 And God heard their groaning, & God **remembered** His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob

- **The Noahic Covenant ...**

Gen 9:15 I will **remember** My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh



2. Specific Individuals in Distress or Prayer

When people are suffering, isolated, or seeking His intervention, God is described as remembering them to deliver or bless them.

- **The Isolated: Gen 8:1** And God **remembered** Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark

- **The Childless: Gen 30:22** Then God **remembered** Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb." (also Hannah in **1 Sam 1:19**)
- **The Righteous in Judgment: Gen 19:29** And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God **remembered** Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow...

3. Human Frailty and Limitation

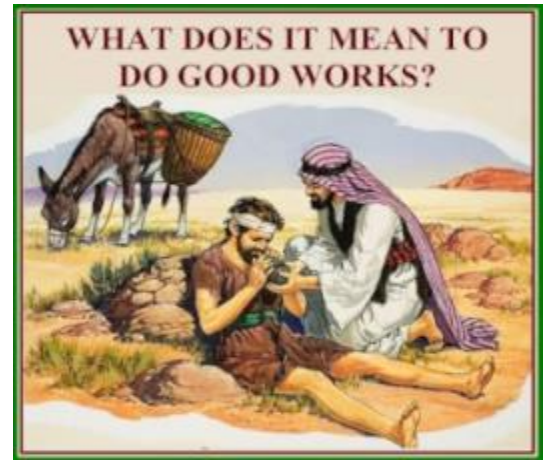
God remembers the weakness of human design, so He shows mercy.

- **Our Origin: Psalm 103:14** For He knows our frame; He **remembers** that we are dust

4. Good Works and Faithfulness

God retains a record of service, charity, and love shown by His followers.

- **Acts of Love:** **Heb 6:10** For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His name...
- **Prayers and Alms:** *An angel tells Cornelius*
Acts 10:4 Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God



5. Unrepentant Sins & Injustice

For those who reject Him or oppress others, God remembers their actions for judgment.

- **Group Wickedness:** Regarding Babylon the Great ...**Rev 18:5** For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has **remembered** her iniquities
- **Individual Rebellion:** **Hosea 9:9** They have deeply corrupted themselves... He will **remember** their iniquity; He will punish their sins

What God Forgets (Remembers No More)

Scripture highlights that when God forgives, He legally chooses never to bring up or act upon specific things again.

1. The Sins of the Forgiven

Under the New Covenant, the defining characteristic of God's forgiveness is the deliberate striking of past transgressions from His active record.

- **The New Covenant Promise:** **Heb 8:12 / Jer 31:34** For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will **remember no more**
- **For His Own Sake:** **Isa 43:25** I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will **not remember** your sins

2. Past Righteousness (If a Person Turns to Wickedness)

Scripture notes that if a righteous person completely turns away into unrepentant sin, their past good deeds are no longer counted or "remembered" in their favour.

- **Turning Away:** **Eze 18:24** But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity... all the righteousness which he has done shall **not be remembered**..."



3. The "Former Things" of the Old Earth

In the final renewal of creation, the sorrows, sins, and pain associated with the old order of the world will be completely erased from our memory.

- **A New Creation:** **Isa 65:17** For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall **not be remembered** or come to mind

For us to **remember** ...

In the Torah, **Jewish tradition has especially identified six foundational "remembrances" (Hebrew: *Shesh Zechirot*, "Six Remembrances")** that are to be recalled continually. These are derived from explicit commands in the Torah.

#	<u>Command to Remember</u>	<u>Torah Reference</u>	<u>What is to be remembered</u>	<u>Primary Lesson</u>
1	Remember the Exodus from Egypt	Deu 16:3; also Exo 13:3	God's deliverance from slavery	Gratitude, faith, redemption, obedience
2	Remember the giving of the Law at Horeb (Sinai)	Deu 4:9–10	The covenant and God's revelation	Faithfulness to God's commandments and teaching future generations
3	Remember what Amalek did	Deu 25:17–19	Amalek's attack on the weak during Israel's journey	Justice, vigilance against evil
4	Remember the sin of the golden calf / Israel's rebellion	Deu 9:7	Israel's repeated rebellion in the wilderness	Humility, repentance, dependence on God's mercy
5	Remember what God did to Miriam	Deu 24:8–9	Miriam's punishment for speaking against Moses	Guarding the tongue, respecting God's authority
6	Remember the Sabbath day	Exo 20:8–11	The seventh-day Sabbath established at creation	Worship, rest, acknowledging God as Creator

Why these six?

These six cover the major pillars of Israel's covenant relationship:

<u>Remembrance</u>	<u>Focus</u>
Exodus	Redemption
Sinai	Revelation and covenant
Amalek	God's enemies and justice
Golden calf / rebellion	Human sin and God's mercy
Miriam	Holiness in speech and conduct
Sabbath	Creation and sanctification

Together they remind Israel:

- who God is,
- what He has done,
- how He expects His people to live,
- the consequences of rebellion,
- the importance of covenant faithfulness.





Our Forgetting

Scripture highlights things we must choose to forget & things we are warned never to forget.

1. What We Should Actively Forget

The Bible instructs us to let go of certain elements of our past so that we can fully walk into what God has planned for us.

- **Past Mistakes and Prior Achievements:** Paul emphasizes that focusing on the past hinders future progress.

Philip 3:13–14 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind** and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- **Old Seasons and Hardships:** God prompts His people to look forward rather than dwelling on former desolations.

Isa 43:18–19 Do **not remember** the former things, Nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert.

2. What We Must Never Forget

A significant portion of Scripture warns against **spiritual amnesia**—forgetting God’s character, His laws, or His provisions.

- **God's Blessings and Benefits:** Believers are explicitly commanded to keep God's kindness at the forefront of their minds.

Psalms 103:2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, And **forget not** all His benefits...

- **God's Word and Identity (The Forgetful Hearer):** James warns against looking into Scripture and immediately failing to apply it.

James 1:23–24 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and **immediately forgets** what kind of man he was

- **Doing Good and Sharing:** The author of Hebrews reminds believers that active ministry is a form of worship.

Heb 13:16 But do **not forget** to do good & to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased

3. What God Assures Us He Will Not Forget - God's dedication to His people is absolute.

- **His People:** Even when human relationships fail, God promises an unbreakable bond.

Isa 49:15–16 Can a woman **forget** her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may **forget**, Yet I will not **forget** you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands...

- **Your Labor and Love:** God notices and records the acts of service done in His name.

Heb 6:10 For God is not unjust to **forget** your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, & do minister

Key things ... We are to Remember ... about those who have died in the faith:

1. They "Sleep in Jesus" (A Temporary State)

1 Thes 4:14 — "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who **sleep in Jesus.**"

The dead in Christ are described as "sleeping" — a temporary rest from which they will awaken at Christ's return.



2. They Are "Blessed" and Rest from Their Labours

Rev 14:13 — "Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: **Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord** from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may **rest from their labours,** and their works follow them.'"

Those who die in the Lord are blessed, at rest, and their faithful works endure.

3. They Will Be Resurrected

1 Cor 15:21-22 — "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, **even so in Christ all shall be made alive.**"

Death is not the end. There is a resurrection coming for those who are Christ's.

4. They Are "Absent from the Body, Present with the Lord"

2 Cor 5:8 — "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather **to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.**"

For believers, death means our next conscious thought will be "present with the Lord" at the resurrection when Jesus returns

5. To Die Is Gain for the Believer

Philippians 1:21 — "For to me, to live is Christ, and **to die is gain.**"

Death is not defeat but gain for those in Christ — a transition to something far better in the Kingdom of God.

6. They Are "Dead in Christ" — Part of God's Redeemed People

1 Thes 4:16 — "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, & with the trumpet of God. & **the dead in Christ will rise first.**"

The dead are identified as being "in Christ" — & are united with Him first at His return.

7. Death Is the Common Destiny of All — A Sober Reminder

Eccl 7:2 — "**Better to go to the house of mourning** Than to go to the house of feasting, **For that is the end of all men;** And the living will take it to heart."

Remembering the dead reminds us that death comes to all, & the living should take this to heart



8. Their Works Follow Them

Rev 14:13 — "...their works follow them."

What the deceased did in faith continues to bear fruit and is remembered by God.

Scripture calls us to remember that those who have died in Christ are:

- **At rest**, not suffering - **With the Lord**, not abandoned - **Awaiting resurrection**, not permanently gone - **Blessed**, not cursed - **Remembered by God**, their works following them