

# THEISM

## God Gives

A gift is a present, favor, benefit, or blessing bestowed upon someone, whether customary or special, whether voluntarily or as tribute, whether as honor or as reward, whether occasional or spontaneous, or any other reason. Giving, in one form or another, is common to all humanity. However, no one gives more or better than God. God's many gifts indicate his greatness.

God gives every good and perfect gift (1 Chronicles 29:14; James 1:17; 2 Peter 1:3). God gives life itself (Isaiah 42:5; Job 1:21; Acts 17:25), as well as all things essential for physical existence, including his word (Deuteronomy 8:3; Psalm 119:50, 93; Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4). He prepared the Garden of Eden for the original humans to inhabit (Genesis 2:8). He provided food for human consumption (Genesis 1:29; Ecclesiastes 3:13; 5:19). He gave trees (Genesis 1:9) plants (Genesis 1:29) and animals (Genesis 9:3). He provides water (Genesis 2:10; Numbers 21:16) and clothing (Genesis 3:21; 28:20; Matthew 6:25-33). God provides food for animals (Genesis 1:30; Deuteronomy 11:15) and seasonal rains for crops (Leviticus 26:4-5; 1 Kings 8:36; Isaiah 30:23; Acts 14:17). He provided female companionship for the first male (Genesis 2:18-24; 3:12) and then gave them (and future humanity) ability to have children (Genesis 4:1; 17:16; 48:9). He gives sleep (Psalm 127:2). To some, God gives special abilities in various crafts (Exodus 31:6; 35:30-36:1). To some, God gives wealth (Deuteronomy 8:17-18), as he did to Abraham (Genesis 20:16, 24:35) and to Solomon (2 Chronicles 1:11-12). To some, God gives skill in literature and wisdom (Daniel 1:17). To some, God gives favor (Exodus 12:36; Job 10:12; Psalm 5:12; Proverbs 18:22; Luke 1:30; 2:52; Acts 7:10; 46) or other abilities (1 Peter 4:11). God gave mankind dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26, 28). God provides all natural provisions for human life on this earth.

God also gives people the opportunity and the ability to associate with him. The first man, Adam, was able to talk directly with God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:18; 3:11-17). However, Adam's sin separated most of humanity from direct communication with God. God did speak to Noah, who found grace with Him (Genesis 6:8). Ten generations later, God spoke to Abraham, and began the process for redeeming mankind from sin. God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendents (Genesis 12:7; 15:18; Numbers 27:12; 33:53; Deuteronomy 3:18), which he later did (Deuteronomy 2:36; Joshua 1:13).

God generally communicated to the Israelites through priests (Leviticus 10:11; Deuteronomy 24:8; 2 Kings 17:27; Ezekiel 44:21-23), and prophets (2 Kings 17:13; Jeremiah 7:25; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Ezekiel 38:17; Zechariah 1:6). God communicated sometimes through dreams (Genesis 28:12-15; 37:8, 20; 41:8, 12, 25-26; 1 Samuel 28:15; Daniel 1:17; 2:1-2; Joel 2:28) visions (Genesis 46:2; 2 Chronicles 26:5; Ezekiel 1:1; 8:3; 40:2; 43:3; Daniel 1:17; 2:28; 7:1, 7, 13, 15, Hosea 12:10; Joel 2:28) and other means – such as the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-4:17) and the Urim and Thummin (Exodus 28:30; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65). God made it possible for His people to relate to him by giving them wisdom (1 Kings 4:29), understanding (1 Kings 3:9), a new heart (1 Samuel 10:9), and a good Spirit to teach them (Nehemiah 9:20).

Not only did God give the Israelites the ability to communicate with Him, He also gave them many national blessings. In Canaan, God gave them possession of large and beautiful cities (Deuteronomy 6:10) and also their spoils (Deuteronomy 20:14). Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, God gave them the institution of the Sabbath (Exodus 16:29), the Law (Exodus

24:12; Ezra 7:6; Nehemiah 10:29), covenants, promises (1 Kings 8:56; 2 Kings 17:15; Romans 9:4; Ephesians 2:12), and sacrificial ordinances for their atonement (Leviticus 10:17; 17:11;). When the Israelites were obedient, God gave them peace and rest (Leviticus 26:6; Exodus 33:14; Deuteronomy 3:20; 12:10; 25:19; Joshua 1:15; 21:44; 22:4; 2 Samuel 7:11; 1 Kings 5:4; 8:56; 2 Chronicles 14:7;). Moreover, God gave leadership to the Israelites by providing them with judges (Judges 2:16, 18), priests (Numbers 8:19; Zechariah 3:7), kings (2 Chronicles 13:5), deliverers (2 Kings 13:5), and shepherds with Godlike hearts (Jeremiah 3:15).

All these gifts were a prelude to God's greatest gift – His son! Although the Bible does not explicitly declare the gift of God's son to be His greatest gift, that assessment is sustained by the facts. *The gift of God's son was God's greatest gift because God planned it before the foundation of the world* (Matthew 13:35; 25:34; John 17:24; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20). *The gift of God's son was God's greatest gift because it revealed the extent of God's love.* “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son” (John 3:16, see also John 4:10; 6:32-33). That gift was in the form of His son's death on the cross (Acts 2:23-24; Ephesians 2:16; Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2;) to atone for sin (Romans 3:25; Colossians 1:20; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5). *The gift of God's son was God's greatest expression of love because it brought to mankind the possibility of salvation from sin and its eternal consequences* (John 3:17; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Ephesians 28:8). This gift grants believers eternal life (John 10:28), produces a living hope through the resurrection of Christ (1 Peter 1:3-5) and deliverance from the sting of death (1 Corinthians 15:51-56). Jesus came to save (Matthew 1:21; 18:11; Luke 9:56; John 3:17; 12:47; 1 Timothy 1:15). That salvation is described in terms of **redemption** (Mark 10:45; Acts 20:28; Galatians 3:13; 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 9:12; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 5:9), **justification** (Rom. 3:24; 5:15-17), **reconciliation** (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Ephesians 2:15-16; Colossians 1:21-22), **adoption** (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:5; 1 John 3:1-2) etc. The gift of salvation through God's son is conditional, however, upon recipients believing, being immersed (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16), and continuing in faithful obedience to God (Matthew 25:21-23; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Acts 5:29; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17). *The gift of God's son was God's greatest gift because Jesus promised that after his departure God would give the Holy Spirit* (Luke 11:13; John 14:26; Acts 2:38) which He did. The Holy Spirit was given to apostles to guide them into all truth and bring to their remembrance things Jesus had taught (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit is given to all believers when they are baptized (Acts 2:38; 5:32), as a guarantee of their salvation (Ephesians 1:13-14). *The gift of God's son was God's greatest gift because His son established the church* (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47) The Son of God purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28) giving himself for it (Ephesians 5:25). With the coming of the church, God “gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12). The apostle Paul declared that God also “has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18).

God's gifts do not allow recipients to boast (1 Corinthians 4:7; Ephesians 4:8). Awareness of God's indescribable gift of grace prompts thanksgiving (2 Corinthians 9:15). God's gifts should motivate recipients to usefulness in God's service (1 Timothy 4:14) because through his grace he has created workman for good works (Ephesians 2:10).