

Everlasting Covenant

Key Verse: ***"I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them."***
—Isaiah 61:8

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11
before You."—Ps. 89:14, *NASB*

WE GAIN A VITAL GLIMPSE

into the mind of God in our Key Verse. He loves judgment. The word translated from the Hebrew for "judgment" may also be rendered "justice," as found in Exodus 23:6, *New American Standard Bible*: "You shall not pervert the justice due to your needy brother in his dispute." The psalmist similarly uses the word in this manner, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go

Thus, when we read that God loves judgment we should properly think that he loves justice. He loves what is right, good, and fair. The emphasis is not that he loves to condemn. Rather, he loves to deliver from oppression and uphold what is right and holy. In addition to loving justice, God also hates iniquity in the burnt offering. Specifically, he hates fraud in that which is offered to him. His wrath smolders when hypocrisy taints man's worship of him. Under Israel's Law Covenant arrangement, it was expected that offerings to the Lord would be from the best of the flocks and the firstfruits of the field.

The Prophet Malachi gives us an insight as to why this was required. Someday God would make his name

and character known to all the nations of the earth. The best possible sacrifices should be given—worthy of God’s greatness, mercy, and love. Lesser offerings would diminish him in the eyes of men. We read, “From the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts. But you are profaning it, . . . and you bring what was taken by robbery and what is lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand? says the LORD. But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and My name is feared among the nations.”—Mal. 1:11-14, *NASB*

The Lord’s true, consecrated people will offer him their best. They are one in purpose with him because his Holy Spirit rests upon them. They, as Jesus did, may claim the many privileges of having God’s Spirit, and its effect is profound. As stated in the verses of our lesson, God’s Spirit will cause them to “preach good tidings.” They will desire to “bind up the brokenhearted.” Proclamations of God’s liberty will fill their mouths. It is their privilege to give “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” These who do this are God’s children, “the seed which the LORD hath blessed.”—Isa. 61:1,3,9

These faithful followers of the Master are also referred to in the Bible as “Abraham’s seed.” (Gal. 3:29) While their work for the Lord at the present time is important, it is also preparatory for greater things. These shall ultimately reign with Christ in God’s kingdom to bless “all the kindreds of the earth.” (Acts 3:25) They will promulgate the “everlasting covenant” of blessing, by which “the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”—Isa. 61:11 ■