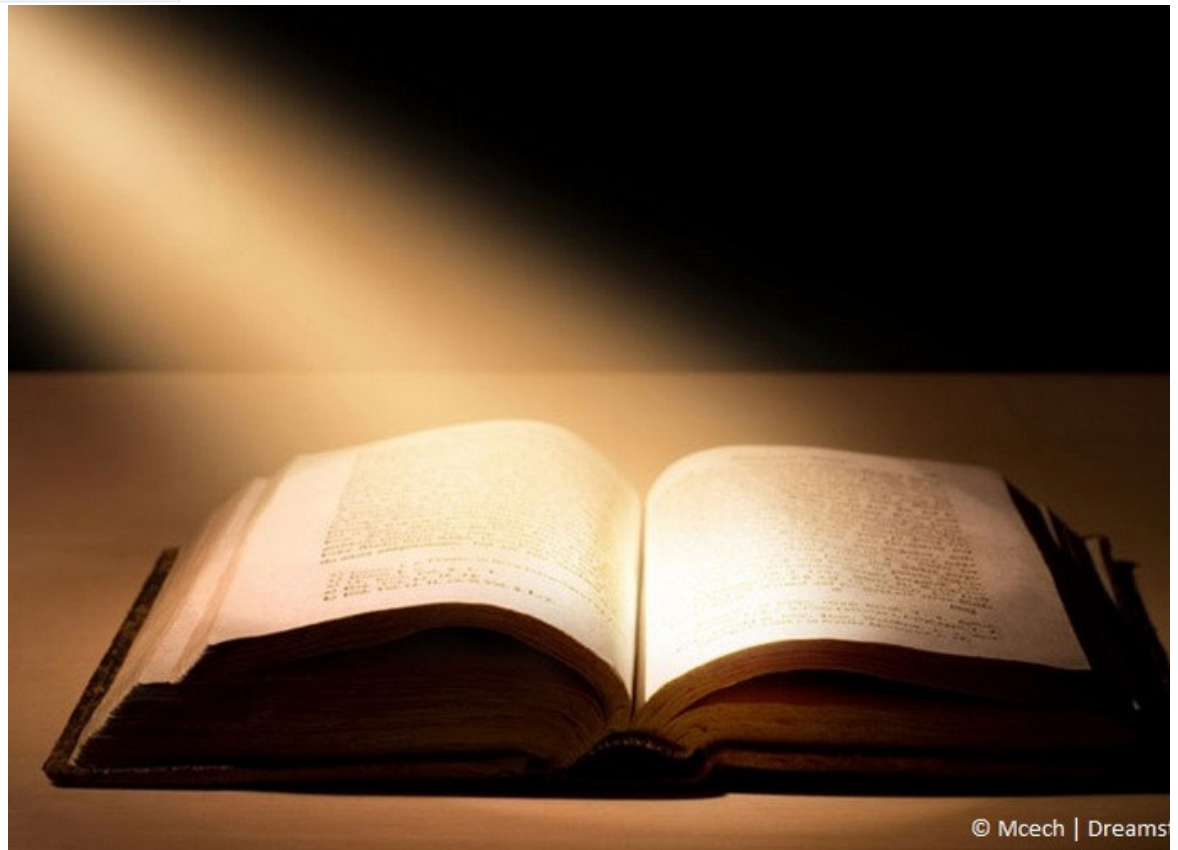


GOSPEL PEARLS

Light years away

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One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him

with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions. (Mark 12: 28-34)

The scribe who meets Jesus really wants to know what the main commandment is and whose observance depends on its being pleasing to God. In answering him, Jesus summarises the ten commandments in just two sentences. In the first, he summarises the first three commandments that concern mankind's relationship with God. In the second sentence, he summarises the other seven commandments which concern relationships among people. Our constant and sincere search to observe them makes us persons of good will and loved by God. The scribe's final remark, which proves Jesus right, is evidence of his honesty and his nearness to the Kingdom of God. Do we also deserve such a comment from Jesus about our own lives, or are we still light years away from reaching God's Kingdom? And if our lives are so distant from the God's Kingdom, how can we improve them starting today?