

# GRACEGAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## HIS LOVINGKINDNESS

*How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.*

*Psalms 36:7-10*

There is probably no other word used in all of the scriptures that so clearly defines the relationship and favor of the LORD to HIS people, than the term "lovingkindness". The Hebrew word "cheched" appears in the OT 248 times. It is translated "mercy" 149 times, "kindness" 40 times, and "lovingkindness" 30 times.

GOD has revealed HIMSELF as merciful. *"The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works."* (Ps.145:8-9) So we can say that all of HIS creation enjoys some measure of HIS mercy. Even as the Psalmist speaks of HIS provision for that which HE has created, *"These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good."* (Psa.104:27-28)

Mercy is a kindness bestowed without obligation. Therefore any kindness which the LORD is pleased to show to any of HIS creation is indeed a mercy. Whether it is the breath we breathe, the food we eat, or the bestowal of HIS favor. No one can demand of GOD anything nor have any reason to expect that HE can compel GOD to show kindness. Thus did Paul say: *"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"* (Rom 9:20) So it is sheer folly for men to consider that because GOD has declared HIMSELF to be full of mercy that HE is somehow obligated or duty bound to show mercy to them.

It is clear from the scriptures that HE reserves the right to dispense mercy according to HIS sovereign pleasure. *"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.---- Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."* (Rom. 9:15;18) It never ceases to amaze me, how that some men expect that GOD must show mercy to all men simply because HE is merciful. Yet mercy could not and would not be mercy if GOD could somehow be obligated to show it. So with all of the rich adjectives that can be used to describe the LORD's mercy none is so appropriate as to define HIS kindness as "sovereign mercy", bestowed when, where and upon whom HE is pleased to confer it.

The LORD has made clear that HE has chosen a people upon whom HE is pleased to show a special kind of mercy which is shared by them alone and none of the rest of all creation but

them. This is that mercy which is defined as “lovingkindness”. Though all “lovingkindness” is borne out of mercy not all mercy is “lovingkindness”.

The “lovingkindness” of the LORD to HIS elect people is primarily associated with three characteristics, love, strength, and steadfastness. These are all exhibited to the people of GOD by HIM who has loved them with an “*everlasting love*” (see Jer.31:3). There is nothing at all that those who are the objects of HIS unmerited favor and grace can point to that makes them any different from those who perish except the sure mercies (see Isa.55:3) of their Heavenly Father who has declared them to be the apple of HIS eye. (see Zech.2:8)

- 1 Awake, my soul, in joyful lays, And sing thy great Redeemer's praise;  
He justly claims a song from me; His loving-kindness, O how free!
- 2 He saw me ruined in the fall, Yet loved me notwithstanding all;  
He saved me from my lost estate; His loving-kindness, O how great!
- 3 Though numerous hosts of mighty foes, Though earth and hell my way oppose,  
He safely leads my soul along; His loving-kindness, O how strong!
- 4 When trouble, like a gloomy cloud, Has gathered thick and thundered loud,  
He near my soul has always stood; His loving-kindness, O how good!
- 5 Often I feel my sinful heart Prone from my Saviour to depart;  
But though I have him oft forgot, His loving-kindness changes not!
- 6 Soon shall I pass the gloomy vale; Soon all my mortal powers must fail;  
O may my last expiring breath His loving-kindness sing in death!
- 7 Then let me mount and soar away To the bright world of endless day,  
And sing with rapture and surprise, His loving-kindness in the skies.

#9 Gadsby's Hymns, Samuel Medley

**LOVE.** *“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1Jo 4:9-10)*  
*“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” (Rom 5:7-9)*

**STRENGTH.** *“The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.” (Exo 15:2-3)* *“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” (Isa 63:1)*

**STEADFASTNESS.** *“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” (Heb 6:17-20)* *“But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (Isa 41:8-10)*