

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XI

Issue 50

*Published occasionally for Zion's mourners*

*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*

---

## JUSTICE AND MERCY

*Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.*

*Psalm 89:14-15*

When the LORD appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai, HE described HIMSELF in this fashion, *“And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.”* (Exo 34:5-6) The LORD would make it plain to him that HIS mercy and longsuffering are etched into HIS character so much that it is impossible to speak of HIM apart from it. If a man should fail to declare the “mercy” of GOD, he would present a caricature of that ONE who rules in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

The word mercy (which literally means loving-kindness or goodness and is the manifestation of compassion) appears in the scriptures over three hundred times. Most often its mention relates to the mercy of the LORD though sometimes as an exhortation to the sons of GOD to demonstrate mercy even as their heavenly FATHER. The Psalmist uses the term over one hundred times in recounting the abundance of kindness which the LORD demonstrates unto men, most especially to those who are the *“apple of HIS eye.”*

The scriptures indicate that there is a demonstration of HIS mercies to all of HIS creation. *“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.”* (Psa 145:8-9) The fact that the *“he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”* (Mat 5:45) is a manifestation of HIS “merciful” character to all creation. The LORD is not obligated to provide anything at all for HIS creation, yet it is clear that HE even clothes the lilies of the field and feeds both the thankful and the unthankful according to HIS purpose. No man can ever say that he has never enjoyed the mercy of GOD.

Yet as we study the scriptures it becomes clear that there is a “mercy” which is not general in nature but is particularly reserved for those who are in a covenant relationship with HIM. *“For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.”* (Isa 54:10) *“As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant.”* (Luke 1:70-72)

Men naturally believe that they can approach unto GOD whenever they like. Since the LORD has revealed HIMSELF as ONE *“whose mercy endureth forever”*, most are confident that their sinful ways will somehow be forgotten or overlooked by HIM who has shown HIS provisional kindness towards HIS creation. In this they do greatly err, since justice is as much etched into

HIS character as mercy is. There can never be any conflict in this nor is there ever any change that occurs in HIM. In the same breath in which the LORD described HIMSELF as "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth"; HE also said, "Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." (Exo 34:7)

While we are sure that HE will show mercy we are also convinced that HE will demand "judicial satisfaction" for the sins of all who transgress HIS law. HE has never forgiven any sin simply by being "merciful" and overlooking it as if it never occurred. "*The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.*" (Nah 1:3) HE does not simply forget about sin by a decree or act of kindness. Rather HIS justice demands that those who have sinned must die.

This puts man in a great dilemma from which he cannot extricate himself. "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" (Rom 3:23) He cannot even expect that he shall influence the GOD of heaven in any manner. "*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. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*" (Rom 9:15-16)

When it comes to the matter of dealing with the forgiveness of sin GOD has reserved the right to bestow HIS mercy upon whom HE chooses since HE is under no obligation to forgive any, and all are equally worthy of destruction. Yet even then HE only does so in keeping with HIS own justice. A broken law demands satisfaction and an entrance into HIS presence requires absolute holiness. None of Adam's fallen race can supply either one.

So we find that according to HIS abundant mercy HE has provided a means whereby HE declares HIS own righteousness and is both "*just, and the justifier*" (Rom 3:26) of all of those HE manifests as HIS own children (see Acts 13:48) by causing them to believe in the righteousness of CHRIST. Truly, "*Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other*" (Psa 85:10) when the LORD JESUS CHRIST was revealed from heaven as the SURETY and SUBSTITUTE of all of those whom the FATHER has loved with an everlasting love.

The Psalmist said, "*Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.*" (Psa 89:15) That "joyful sound" is the gospel which brings great comfort to those who know themselves to be sinners without any hope of entering into the presence of a HOLY GOD. They have no expectation in the mercy of GOD apart from that which HE has made plain by the giving of HIMSELF as a SUBSTITUTE for sinners.

The atonement of CHRIST is a "quid pro quo" (Latin meaning "something for something") payment for the sin of GOD's elect. CHRIST JESUS did not merely make an open ended payment for sin where the outcome of HIS purchase is in doubt (see Isa.53:11) as we hear preached far and wide in the modern day. HIS death on Calvary's cross is a demonstration of the purpose of GOD to show HIS mercy to all of those which were hidden in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world. "*Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.*" (Exo 15:13)

They are the children of the "promise" which was given to CHRIST. (see Gal.:16,17) "*Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.*" (Psa 89:27-29) It is upon these privileged few that the LORD is pleased to magnify HIS mercy and exalt HIS justice in the imputation of CHRIST's righteousness to them while imputing their sin to HIM. In this they are made to be those of whom HE speaks saying, "*And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*" (Exo 20:6) HE is become their righteousness, they are not seen as transgressors but as those who are perfectly obedient and who "*walk in the light of HIS countenance.*" "*Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.*" (Psa 33:22)