

# GRACE GAZETTE

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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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## AN EVERLASTING BUILDING

*For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.*

*Psalm 89:2*

Each time I read it, I am amazed at the LORD's reply to Moses, when he met with the LORD on Mt. Sinai, and requested to see HIS glory. I can think of any number of responses which I would probably deem quite appropriate for such a request. Perhaps HE might have shown Moses (as HE did Isaiah) the grandeur of the angelic host which HE had created in an instant and who cease not day or night to cry out Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD almighty who was and is and is to come. Or perhaps HE might have unfolded to him the vastness of the universe which HE spoke into being. Or HE could have given HIM a glimpse of the final judgment when all creation shall tremble before HIM and either be welcomed into HIS presence or cast away from HIM in the awful pit of torment, destruction, and utter separation from life and light forever.

HE might even have revealed to HIM the vast knowledge which is hidden in HIS treasury of wisdom or HE might have showed HIM the majesty and riches which must surely surround HIS throne upon which HE sits as the SUPREME RULER and SOVEREIGN of all things.. HE might even have given him a detailed summary of every event, as each has unfolded in the heavens and the earth according to HIS predestined and inalterable purpose. HE might have revealed many things which would leave any son of man in breathless wonder before HIM. Yet these are the words which HE spoke; "*I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee.*" (Exo 33:19)

The LORD made it clearly evident that HIS glory is seen in the display of HIS GOODNESS. Not in HIS power, though it is without limit, not in HIS judgment which is immutable and before which all shall flee away, but rather in the manifestation of HIS own GOODNESS. It is this GOODNESS which the eye of sinful flesh cannot behold in its fullness nor have any appreciation for.

Sometimes the potsherd of the earth would seek to define GOD's GOODNESS in their own terms. As if GOD fits into their own notion of what is good, and based upon what they judge to be good they say that HE is good, as if they have any platform upon which to make such an assessment. Yet man's definition of goodness does not define GOD, rather GOD defines GOODNESS and clearly sets it forth before Moses face, though in veiled form as HE hid Moses in the cliff of the ROCK as HIS GLORY passed by, and allowed MOSES to see only HIS backside.

The GOODNESS of GOD is demonstrated to men in the unfolding of HIS mercy. While HIS justice flows out from HIS HOLINESS, HIS mercy flows out from HIS GOODNESS. HE defines the sovereign nature of this mercy as HE went on to tell Moses "*I--- will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*" (Exo 33:19) The natural man of the flesh finds such a definition of HIS goodness to be no goodness at all. This is because the natural man of the flesh believes that he is somehow worthy of being the recipient of GOD's GOODNESS and is owed HIS mercy simply because he believes he ought to have it.

Yet there can be no such thing as “mercy” if it is somehow owed or if it can be earned in any fashion or bestowed on the basis of mans merit or action. Mercy must be Sovereignly dispensed in order to be true mercy. Mercy is kindness displayed for no apparent reason other than the benevolence of the one who bestows it. If this display of kindness could be merited it would not be mercy at all but rather the payment of a debt.

Therefore it is most proper and necessary to consider the LORD’s demonstration of HIS mercy in the context of HIS sovereign prerogative to show mercy to whom HE wills and conversely as Paul clarifies; to “harden whom HE will.” (see Rom. 9:18) Man’s natural state is to be of a hard and obdurate heart, so a consideration of the propriety of a judicial hardening or confirming of men in that condition (as with Pharoah) only serves to magnify the glory of HIS grace which is manifested as HE is pleased to show mercy to some whose nature is no different. Most people who read Romans 9:13 are incensed when they read that GOD hated Esau, yet a true understanding of the natural wickedness of men should leave them in a deeper sense of consternation that HE actually loved Jacob, who by all rights was a conniver.

The LORD committed no act of harm to Esau by hating him. Esau despised his own birthright and had no spiritual interest in the things of GOD. On the other hand Jacob didn’t either but yet because the LORD is GOOD HE determined to show mercy and to bestow HIS love to Jacob even though he had no more natural desert of it than Esau. This is mercy demonstrated. An act of kindness totally and absolutely unmerited, yet poured out from the treasury of HIS GOODNESS.

And so the Psalmist here says; *“Mercy shall be built up forever.”* This is a great comfort to those who have been made by sovereign grace to trust in HIS mercy, leaning not to their own understanding nor expecting to receive something from HIS hand which is in anywise merited by some activity or obedience of their own. In fact these very same ones confess, right along with Jeremiah, *“It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.”* (Lam 3:22-24)

That ROCK upon which all of their hope is built is the unfailing nature of the mercies of GOD which cannot fail even though they are convinced that justice demands their destruction. Jeremiah goes on to say, *“The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.”* (Lam 3:25) This is an abiding source of solace to those whose confession mirrors that of the Psalmist as he says, *“O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”* (Psa 34:8) They do not trust HIM in order to obtain HIS mercy but rather the fact that they trust HIM at all is an evidence of HIS mercy already bestowed upon them.

Out of the GOODNESS of GOD comes forth all manner of blessing unto the sons of men, both now and in the ages to come. Even as Paul said, *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”* (Eph 2:4-7)

This is a “building” which the LORD pitched and not man. See Heb.8:2

This is a “building” whose FOUNDATION rests in the goodness of GOD. See Isa.28:16

This is a “building” whose walls are SALVATION and its GATES are praise. See Isa.60:18

This is a “building” which the saints in all ages have pressed towards. See Heb 11:10

This is a “building” which shall endure forever. See Ps.104:31, John 14:1-3

*“And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.” (2 Chron. 7:3) “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” (Rev 21:23)*