



THE MERCY OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

Mercy is that essential perfection of God, whereby He pities, relieves and forgives the miseries of His fallen creatures. If it were not for sin, God would have no need to show mercy. In the Bible, the words *mercy* and *lovingkindness*, as applied to God, are often used as if they were identical. Jonah declared, *You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, one who relents from doing harm* (Jonah 4:21). God's mercy springs from His divine goodness. Mercy arises solely from God's sovereign pleasure and grace.¹ A heart without God is merciless. It suffers the painful consequences of sin without any relief. In our quarreling, fighting and disputing world that rejects God's Son, we see the opposite of God's mercy. Instead, the attitudes, motives, words, deeds and goals of the destroyer, Satan, constantly bombard us. Intolerance, impatience, far more punishment than justice demands, sadism, wrath, hate, revenge, vindictiveness, unforgiveness, indifference to human suffering, persecution, cruelty, brutality, and torture are commonplace. In other words, man's inhumanity to man is prevalent. Nevertheless, God, by giving His Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins, bestows mercy on the sinful man by not giving him the punishment he deserves. *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* (Lamentations 3:22, 23).

THEME SCRIPTURE

*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*² (Titus 3:5).

¹ grace: God's unmerited favor towards mankind through which sinful man escapes the punishment he deserves.

² *Holy Spirit*: The third person of the Godhead. The Spirit of God who dwells in the believer (1 Corinthians 3:16) and empowers him to be a witness (Acts 1:8).

SECTION I - Definitions

1. WRITE your own definition of *mercy*. _____

Dictionary Definition

The dictionary defines *mercy* as leniency, softheartedness, mildness, decency, tenderness, gentleness, compassion; forbearance shown especially to an offender, disposition to forgive or be kind, power to forgive.

Biblical Definitions

There are several Hebrew and Greek words for *mercy*. They include pity, love, lovingkindness, pardon, graciousness, more kindness than justice requires, clemency, just judgment, divine compassion, tenderness, propitiousness, appeasement, and benevolence.

Scripture Descriptions

2. READ the following Scriptures on God's mercy. UNDERLINE the words and/or phrases that speak of God's mercy.

Exodus 34:6, 7a	<i>And the Lord passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin . . .'</i>
Psalms 57:10	<i>For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens . . .</i>
Psalms 86:5	<i>For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.</i>
Psalms 103:17	<i>But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children.</i>
Lamentations 3:22, 23	<i>Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.</i>
Micah 7:18, 19	<i>Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.</i>

Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

3. What did you learn about God's mercy from these Scriptures? _____

PERSONAL

How has God's mercy been given to you? _____

SECTION II – God's Unchangeable Mercy

Both the Old and New Testament proclaim the mercy of God, but the Old Testament mentions God's mercy four times more than the New Testament. This last fact shows the error of common belief that the God of the Old Testament is primarily a God of judgment, while the God of the New Testament, as characterized through Jesus, is primarily a God of mercy and grace. Basically, there is no difference between the Old and New Testaments in regards to His mercy. As God is the same yesterday, today, and forever so is His mercy.

God's Mercy Demonstrated in the Old Testament

READ Nehemiah Chapter 9.

Chapter 9 is a rehearsal of the *manifold mercies* of God as He displayed them to the Children of Israel in spite of their own continual ingratitude and wickedness. In verses 1-15, the Israelites are assembled to fast and confess their sins and the sins of their fathers. They recall the miracles that God performed in leading them out of bondage and into the Promised Land.

1. How did the Children of Israel and their fathers' respond to God's goodness and wonders in leading them (vv. 16, 17a)?

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2. Why didn't God forsake them (v. 17b)? _____
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3. What kind of idol did they choose that provoked God to anger (v. 18)? _____
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PERSONAL

What stands between you and God that blinds you to His wonders? _____

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4. In God's manifold mercies, how did He lead the children of Israel by day and by night (v. 19)? _____
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5. Despite their rejection of God, He instructed them by His Good Spirit. How did God provide for their physical needs (vv. 20, 21)?
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-
6. How else did He show His mercy (vv. 22-25)? _____
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7. Although they delighted in God's great goodness, WRITE the five things they did to provoke God to anger (v. 26).

8. What happened to the Children of Israel because of their continuous disobedience and rebellion (v. 27)?

What did the people do when they got themselves into trouble? _____

What did God do and why? _____

9. Again, the people did evil before God and He gave them into the hand of their enemies. Once more they cried unto the Lord. According to God's mercies, how often did He deliver them (v. 28)?

10. Why did God testify³ against them? How did the children of Israel again respond (v. 29)? _____

11. For many years God had been patient with His rebellious people. How did He testify against them (v. 30)?

How did they respond? _____

³ testify: admonish, rebuke, reprimand, correct.

12. Why did God not utterly consume nor forsake them (v. 31)? _____

13. WRITE the description of God (vv. 32, 33). _____

14. What did the people and the leaders acknowledge about themselves (vv. 33b-35)? _____

15. The people of God had been called to be servants of God. What conditions were they in instead (vv. 36, 37)?

16. What did the people do to demonstrate their change of heart toward God and His Word (v. 38)? _____

PERSONAL

Is there an area(s) in your life where you have been continually rebellious to God and His Word? In light of His abundant mercy, how will you demonstrate your change of heart toward the Lord?

Mercy Shown in the New Testament
READ Mark 10:46-52.

NOTE: For parallel passages READ Matthew 20:29-34 and Luke 18:35-43.

1. Who was with Jesus when he went out of Jericho (v. 46)? _____

What was Bartimaeus doing? _____

2. What did he hear (v. 47)? _____ 4

What did he cry out? _____ 5

3. How was the blind man warned (v. 48)? _____

What did he cry out all the more? _____

4. How did Jesus react (v. 49)? _____

How was the blind man encouraged? _____

Bartimaeus forsook seeking the multitudes' mercy of alms⁶ for the supernatural mercy that only God can give (v. 50).

5. How did Jesus respond to his plea for mercy (v. 51)? _____

With what other divine title did the blind man address Jesus? _____
_____ 7

What was his request? _____

⁴ Jesus of Nazareth: One of Jesus' earthly names referring to the town where He grew up as a carpenter.

⁵ Son of David: Christ's royal earthly title as descending from the line of King David as promised in II Samuel 7:12, 14.

⁶ alms: money, food, or clothing given to the sick and poor.

⁷ Rabboni: a title of honor; O Great One, Master, Chief, Prince, Teacher.

6. What did Jesus command (v. 52)? _____

How did Jesus show His abundant mercy to the blind man? _____

PERSONAL

In what area of your life do you need God's mercy? _____

SECTION III – Scriptural References of God's Mercy

1. The following are facts about God's mercy. MATCH the letter of each Scripture reference below to the fact found in that Scripture.

Example:	a. Psalm 23:6	<u> G </u>	God is merciful and will not be angry forever
	b. Psalm 103:8	<u> </u>	His Mercy is great above the heavens
	c. Psalm 108:4	<u> </u>	God is the Father of mercies and God of all comfort
	d. Psalm 116:5	<u> </u>	His tender mercies are over all His works
	e. Psalm 136:1	<u> </u>	God's abundant mercies have given us a living hope through Jesus Christ
	f. Psalm 145:9	<u> </u>	Goodness and mercy shall follow me . . .
	g. Jeremiah 3:12b	<u> </u>	God is good, His Mercy endures forever
	h. Luke 1:78	<u> </u>	Through God's tender mercies the Dayspring From On High ⁸ has visited us
	i. II Corinthians 1:3	<u> </u>	The LORD is merciful, gracious, slow to anger
	j. Ephesians 2:4	<u> </u>	Our God is merciful
	k. I Peter 1:3	<u> </u>	God is rich in mercy

⁸ Dayspring From On High: the divine title of Christ which means *a rising up*. The One through whom the Light arose into the world dispelling the spiritual darkness.

2. Using all of the verses above WRITE a definition of God's mercy. _____

THEME SCRIPTURE

WRITE the THEME SCRIPTURE.

_____ (Titus 3:5).

*God be merciful to us and bless us,
and cause His face to shine upon us,
Selah.*

Psalm 67:1

NOTE: _____

[illegible]

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All Scripture found in this study is from the New King James Bible unless noted otherwise.
Due to the holy nature of God, the first letter of all references to Him,
His holy name, and His Word have been capitalized.

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