

GOD IS MERCIFUL

Men of faith recognize and understand that Almighty God is full of mercy. Interceding for the nation of Israel, Moses petitioned Jehovah, "Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy..." (Numbers 14:19). The psalmist recalled how God "relented according to the multitude of His mercies" in spite of Israel's rebellion (Psalm 106:45). Our God, the true and living God, is truly "rich in mercy" (Ephesians 2:4).

From the heavenly viewpoint, mercy describes God's attitude toward those who are in need and in distress, hurting and suffering. He feels pity and compassion for the ills of mankind. The heavenly Father is not only omniscient; He cares. How much He cares is manifested by how much God has done to heal the broken hearted, to mend the lame, to strengthen the weak and to comfort the sad.

Jehovah God possesses eternal heavenly resources to meet man's needs. As "the Father of mercies" (2 Corinthians 1:3), He is more than capable of supplying the right kind of compassion no matter what the situation is. He knows how and can succor men in their infirmities and afflictions, in their struggles and troubles. He brings real and meaningful sympathy to life.

The wealth of God's mercy is unveiled in the salvation of sinners (Titus 3:5). The greatest need of men is saving their souls. With the perfect blending of His love, kindness and grace, our Creator has actively offered and shown the greatness of His mercy in providing the means of pardon. According to the law of Moses, high priests annually sacrificed special sin offerings on the Day of Atonement and then sprinkled some of the blood on the "mercy seat" in the Holiest of Holies (Leviticus 16:14-15). In this manner the priest made atonement for all the sins of the people. The old law was actually foreshadowing better things to come regarding the greatness of God's mercy.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, is our propitiation now (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2). He is our "mercy seat." Jesus shed His own blood to atone for our iniquities and transgressions (Hebrews 9:11, 14) and then entered the holiest of all, Heaven itself, with His own blood to put away sin (9:24-26). Heavenly mercy predestined and then executed the plan for redeeming sinners.

God is the source of true mercy (Hebrews 4:16). All men are in need of mercy because all have sinned. Our greatest afflictions and infirmities are not physical ones but spiritual. The Great Physician calls sinners to repentance (Matthew 9:12-13). God in Christ offers all of us remission of sins. The joy of forgiveness is attainable. The burden of a guilty conscience can be replaced by a good conscience toward God. The immeasurable mercies of God fill empty hearts with overflowing peace and hope.