

## HIS GREAT MERCY

By Jason Rollo

To truly understand the one true and living God, one must study God's perfect nature and the many aspects thereof. God's Word is the mind of God revealed to man in written form, and within this inspired document we learn about God's holiness, justice, love, and kindness, along with numerous other notable characteristics. Among this list of identifiers, one would surely find the concept of God's great **MERCY**. It is to this specific point that we now turn. "God's Great Mercy" is notably shown in the Bible.

"...The Lord God, **merciful** and gracious...Keeping **mercy** for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..."  
(Exo. 34:6-7).

"The earth, O Lord, is full of **mercy**..." (Ps. 119:64).

"God...is rich in **mercy**..." (Eph. 2:4).

"O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: because His **mercy** endureth for ever..." (Ps. 118:1).

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of **mercies**, and the God of all comfort..." (2 Cor. 1:3).

Clearly, the Bible declares "His Great Mercy!" Yet, what is "mercy," and what exactly does it mean, when the Bible speaks of it? Various Bible dictionaries offer the following definitions: Mercy is "the aspect of God's love that causes Him to help the miserable" (Nelson). Mercy is "kindness or good will toward the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them" (Thayer). Mercy is "the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it. Mercy signifies, in general, to feel sympathy with the misery of another, and especially sympathy manifested in act" (Vine).

Let us consider "God's Great Mercy" in three ways, namely: 1) God's Mercy Illustrated, 2) God's Mercy Extended and 3) God's Mercy Appreciated.

### God's Mercy Illustrated

Leviticus chapter 16 is one of the greatest chapters in the Old Testament. It vividly describes Israel's great Day of Atonement. This annual event saw the High Priest in the Most Holy Place sprinkling the blood of a spotless bull (for the sins of the priests) and later the blood of a spotless goat (for the sins of the people) upon the Mercy Seat. The Mercy Seat, of course, was the covering for the Ark of the Covenant wherein God's Law was contained. Further, resting on the end of each side of the Mercy Seat were representations of Cherubim (i.e., angelic beings). The symbolism is too obvious to miss: Seeing the High Priest sprinkle blood upon the Mercy Seat reminds us of God's willingness to have mercy (as opposed to justifiable punishment) upon the transgressions against Him (i.e., violations of His Law) by rolling forward the sins of His people, until the time of Christ (Heb. 9:22-23; 10:3-4, 11-12, 19). Compare such to the New Testament, wherein Jesus is considered our propitiation (i.e., our Mercy Seat, 1 Jn. 1-2, 4:10; Rom. 3:25). All have sinned (Rom. 3:23), but those who have obeyed the Gospel have a Mercy Seat—through the blood of Christ (2 Thes. 1:8, Eph. 1:7, Rom. 6:3-4)!

### **God's Mercy Extended**

Although underserved, through Christ, mankind has access to God's loving mercy and kindness. In Christ (note, "IN" Christ—not "out" of Christ, Gal. 3:27-29), lost humanity finds God's pity and compassion—His Great Mercy! Quoting Old Testament prophecy, Hebrews 8:12 reads, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Obviously reflecting on the typology of the Old Testament (cf., the Day of Atonement discussed earlier), 1 Peter 1:2-5 discusses God's "abundant mercy" made possible through the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Also, this text makes it clear that such "abundant mercy" is only available to those who are involved in Biblical "faith" and "obedience."

### **God's Mercy Appreciated**

As Hebrews 4:15-16 reveals, through Christ, we are able to "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," and thus we are able to "come boldly unto the throne of [God's] grace." Additionally, "God's Great Mercy" should cause us to be willing to extend mercy to others (Mat. 5:7). James 2:13 declares, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." James 3:17 teaches us that (like God) Christians should be "full of mercy." Those who truly appreciate God's mercy, will themselves extend mercy (pity, compassion, a desire to help the helpless) to others (cf., helping orphans, widows, extending benevolence when needed, spreading the gospel to the lost, *etcetera*).