

30th of October 2016

The nature of God – Pt 4 God is merciful, gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded.

1. God is merciful and gracious.

“And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious” (Ex.34: 6).

See also Ps.103: 8, 116: 5.

According to the Oxford dictionary grace is “unmerited favour of God”, mercy is “compassion by one to another who...has no claim to kindness.” The scriptures establish a link between
i) grace and kindness – “For his merciful kindness is great toward us” (Ps.117: 2), and
ii) compassion, grace, and mercy – “But thou, O Lord, [art] a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth” (Ps.86: 15).

All the verses in this point are from the Old Testament yet in the New Testament we find that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ – Jn.1: 17 and that the Word (Christ) was full of grace and truth.

2. God is longsuffering.

“And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering” (Ex.34: 6).

Our verse adds another dimension to, and is a result of God’s mercy and grace, and that is God’s willingness to suffer long with man and his sin, in the hope that he will be saved. 2Pet.3: 15 says that “the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation”. In other words, God puts up with our sin, showing us mercy and grace until we came to the knowledge of our sin and believe the gospel of Christ.

3. God is abundant in goodness.

“And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth” (Ex.34: 6).

God’s mercy, grace and longsuffering cumulate in His abundant goodness to man that leads “thee to repentance” (Rom.2: 4). And the “goodness of God endureth continually” (Ps.52: 1).

Additional comments on our three points.

Because man is inherently sinful and none “seeketh after God” (Rom.3: 11), and God is holy (Ps.99: 9), the only way for any to be saved is if God shows man mercy, grace, longsuffering and an abundance of goodness. The first step in man knowing God’s mercy, grace, longsuffering and goodness in His Son is to acknowledge his own sinfulness, and then believe the gospel of Christ.

Applying the teaching to our life today.

The repugnance and depravity of a man’s sins can often be used by the sinner as his reason for believing that God will not accept him and therefore he does not believe His Son.

Question to think about.

If God showed abundant grace and mercy to Israel, and grace came by Christ Jesus, then what extra dimension of grace does Christ bring?

My answer to our question from the scriptures.

The sinner does not need to have a continual sacrifice of bulls and goats for their sin because the sacrifice of God’s only begotten Son is sufficient for **all** sin, regardless of the depravity of the sin. If the sinner truly believes in his heart unto righteousness then the one who is “full of grace” has shed sufficient blood to wash away **all** his sin. And so there is an extra dimension of grace in Christ.