

The School of Biblical Law
Introduction to Law and Grace
Lesson Twenty-One: “The Giving of Mercy”

In both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, God made provision for the penalty of the broken law to be ascribed to a substitute, thus the covenant man could remain in right relationship with God and not suffer the sanctions of death and banishment. In providing a substitute, God was offering mercy or provision to His covenant partner.

1. Psalms 103:8-18: “The LORD is **merciful** and **gracious**, slow to anger, and **plenteous in mercy**. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his **mercy** toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father **pitieth** his children, so the LORD **pitieth** them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the **mercy** of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them.”

The following three Hebrew words found in Psalms 103 identify the manner in which God relates to those in covenant with Him:

- **Merciful/Pitieth:** Hebrew verb *raham* (Strong's #7355) and adjective *raham* (Strong's #7349), meaning compassion and pity. The Greek equivalents are *oikterio* (#3627) and *splanchnon* (#4698)
 - **Gracious:** Hebrew verb *hanan* (Strong's #2603) and adjective *hannun* (Strong's #2587), meaning grace or favor. The Greek counterpart is *charis* (Strong's # 5485).
 - **Plenteous in mercy:** Hebrew noun *hesed* (Strong's #2617) based upon root *hasad* (Strong's 2616), meaning mercy or loving kindness. The Greek comparable word is *eleos* (Strong's #1656).
2. Mercy separates the sinner from the sin by giving a substitute and assigning the penalty to another.
 3. God deals with man either in mercy or in wrath. “And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful (*raham* – pity) and gracious (*hannan* – grace), long-suffering, and abundant in goodness (*hesed* – mercy) and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” (Ex. 34:6 -7)

Guilty remain guilty until they meet God on the ground of His mercy, which is truth.

- Ps. 85:10(a): “Mercy (*hesed*) and truth are met together.”
- Jonah 2:8: “They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy (*hesed*).”
- Luke 18:9-14: The story of the Pharisee and the publican

To receive mercy, one must acknowledge his need to for aid and call out for help. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven” (Mt. 5:3). The substitutionary work of Christ provided all the mercy and forgiveness that would ever be necessary for God's just penalties to be satisfied. “Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption. He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities” (Ps. 130:7-8).