

The Doctrines of Grace

Doctrine 1-The Absolute Sovereignty of God

Part C/Lesson Three of Three

Part C How Does God Manifest His Absolute Sovereignty Throughout His Creation?- continued

3. God Manifests His Absolute Sovereignty through the Distribution of His Mercy

Exodus 33:17-20

17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

Romans 9:14-16

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Mercy: (noun) The compassionate or kindly forbearance shown to an offender or enemy. Pity. Benevolence. The discretionary power of a judge to pardon or mitigate punishment.¹

Mercy: (noun) The Attribute of God that flows from Compassion and Forbearance, and which (according to Scripture) involves Pardon; Forgiveness; or the Mitigation of either earthly or eternal penalties or both. God issues Mercy (as a normal part of the exercise of His Holy Nature) from His exclusive position of having the guilty human (who is entirely unable to make any claim for that Mercy) under His complete Authority.²

¹ Dictionary.com

² *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*; edited by Walter Elwell; (2001 Baker Books; page 761)

By definition- Mercy *cannot* be earned, deserved, or worked for. And also by definition- the one true living God of the Bible *cannot* ever be obligated, coerced, or forced to give Mercy to anyone. Mercy must always be free and unencumbered. It *cannot* ever be owed to anyone- else it isn't Mercy.

That which is owed to another is a payment, or a duty, or an obligation- but it isn't Mercy. For example- if someone works for another all week long and at the end of the week- he is paid for his services- that payment is *not* an example of Mercy. An example of Mercy would be a guilty man standing before a judge and- based on nothing more than the free and unobligated compassion of the judge- that guilty man is relieved of the penalty of his guilt and allowed to go free. Therefore a workable definition of Mercy would be:

Not receiving something that is deserved

And in the case of Salvation- the distribution of God's Mercy would be that God Sovereignly chooses *not* to give the guilty sinner the Eternal Damnation that he deserves. So the distribution of Divine Mercy is entirely up to the Good Pleasure and Compassion of God- Who freely issues Mercy to whom He will and in the amounts that please Him.

The Bible teaches that God issues Mercy *Sovereignly*- or in other words- God issues His Mercy in such a way as to fulfill His *Own* Purposes and Plan- and *not* based on either our *need* for it or even our *desire* to obtain it. The Holy Bible does *not* teach that God issues Mercy to whomever needs it or whoever asks for it- but the Bible teaches that God has a very *precise* way in which He issues His Mercy:

... I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy... (Romans 9:15b)

The Bible clearly teaches that everyone who has needed Mercy did not receive it:

Hebrews 10:28

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

Hebrews 12:16&17

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

So we must be careful that we do not "presume" on the Mercy of God as though we were *entitled* to it, or as though God was *obligated* to give it. In other words- we must take heed to ourselves that we do not sin with abandon- wrongly thinking that because God loves us so much- that He will *always* forgive us no matter what we do.

Matthew 7:13-27

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Matthew 25:1-13

1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

- 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.**
- 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.**
- 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.**
- 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.**
- 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.**
- 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.**

Luke 6:43

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Luke 13:24-28

- 24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.**
- 25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:**
- 26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.**
- 27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.**
- 28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.**

The Acts 8:18-24

- 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,**
- 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.**
- 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.**
- 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.**
- 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps (if it is possible ESV) the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.**
- 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.**
- 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.**

Justice and Mercy

Since God is Absolutely Holy, and Man is absolutely wicked- God is not *obligated* to save *anyone*. God would be perfectly Just to allow all of Mankind to enter into the Damnation of eternal hell right at this very moment. So as we discuss the issuance of Divine Mercy- we must keep in mind that *nobody* deserves Salvation; *nobody* is entitled to Eternal Life; *nobody* has earned the right to be Forgiven, and God is not *obligated* in any way to save a single soul.

The Scriptures declare repeatedly that every human being on earth is guilty of sin, and thus every man, woman, and child on earth has *earned* and *deserves* nothing but the Wrath of God and Eternal Damnation as a Just Payment for their wickedness.

Romans 3:8b-18

8 ... Their condemnation is just.

9 What then? Are we better *than they*? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

10 As it is written: (Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-4)

"There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands;

There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside;

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one."

13 "Their throat is an open tomb;

With their tongues they have practiced deceit";

"The poison of asps is under their lips";

14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;

17 And the way of peace they have not known."

18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

The Perfect Justice of God is vindicated and God is glorified by His Holy Vengeance against all sin in damning guilty sinners to Everlasting Punishment.

The Revelation 20:15

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

So even though God didn't have to save *anyone*- in the manifestation of His Sovereign Goodness- God has chosen to mercifully rescue *some* of the wicked sinners from the Just Wrath of God. And the ones who are given this Divine Mercy have just as *willfully* and *repeatedly* transgressed against Him as the rest.

In other words- God has chosen to Sovereignly issue Mercy to *some* of the guilty people of the world. And the people who are graciously given this Mercy are no more worthy or no more entitled to it than the others- but they have been chosen to be rescued from Eternal Damnation- based on nothing more than the Sovereign Pleasure of God. The Sovereign distribution of this Mercy is called "Sovereign Election," or "Predestination," or "Foreknowledge".

Ephesians 1:3-9

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Romans 8:29&30

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Now as you study the tense of the Greek verbs that are used in this verse- you can clearly see that what verse 30 is actually saying is:

Moreover (all of those) whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and (all of those) whom he called, them he also justified: and (all of those) whom he justified, them he also glorified.

In other words- God has determined (from before the foundation of the world) to save some unworthy sinners through the distribution of His Own Sovereign Mercy, and God has equally determined to give the rest of the unworthy sinners His Own Sovereign Justice.

And because God is Absolutely Sovereign, and because He operates all things "**according to the good pleasure of His Will**"- all of those to whom God has chosen to show Sovereign Mercy will be saved, and all those who are saved will be kept "**by the Power of God**" all the way to Heaven.

John 6:37-40,44

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Mercy Glorifies God

The Sovereign distribution of Divine Mercy glorifies God precisely because it is *not* obligatory. It is precisely because guilty sinners do *not* deserve this Mercy; because unworthy transgressors of the Law are *not* entitled to it- that makes it so glorious for God to give it. If God were *obligated* to give Mercy simply because wicked sinners *need* it- then God would not be doing anything more than what He was *supposed* to do, or what He was *obligated* to do- and that would *not* allow for what God gave to be called "Mercy"- it would be a "payment" for what was owed, or a "duty" for what was obligated, but it would *not* be something that God gave freely and un-coerced.

But because the distribution of Divine Mercy is solely in God's Prerogative- and is *not* based on our need or even our desire to obtain it- therefore- it brings great Glory to God's Own Personal Goodness that He freely distributes it *without* obligation. So because the distribution of Divine Mercy lies within God's Own Free Will- it makes Mercy to truly be magnificent.

And the Bible clearly reveals that this Mercy is *not* a *general* offer of Mercy to *all* of Mankind- but a *premeditated* and *determined* and *focused gift* of Mercy to those whom God has Sovereignly chosen to give it.

From the Beginning

A very good question that usually comes up at this point is this:
"Is the Sovereign Distribution of Mercy a New Testament phenomenon, or is this the way that God has always operated?"

And the answer to that question is that the Scriptures reveal that this is the way that God has *always* operated from the very beginning. For example- God

Sovereignly chose to distribute this Divine Mercy on Abram- a wicked idolater- to be the father of a people who would come out from one part of his children.

Genesis 12:1-3

1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Now although Abram had another son (Ishmael) God Sovereignly chose to give Isaac this same Mercy- not because Isaac was more worthy of it than the other son- but solely based upon God's Own Will. And although Isaac had another son (Esau)- who was in fact the firstborn and would have normally been the *favoured* son (who by birthright would have been entitled to receive it)- God Sovereignly chose to completely bypass Esau and distribute this Divine Mercy to Jacob.

Genesis 25:21-23

21 And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD.

23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

Malachi 1:1-3

1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,

3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

Romans 9:10-16

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

And this was so true that when it came time to identify Himself to Moses- God didn't say He was the God of *all* the offspring of Abraham- but only of three people- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob- completely *bypassing* the other relatives of Abraham and the other children of Abraham- although they were equally of his flesh and blood.

Exodus 3:6a

Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...

Deuteronomy 7:6-10

6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.

The word that was translated into English here as “**above**” is the Hebrew word, “*koel*” which means: *to the exclusion of the whole*. So when God says that He chose the Jew to “**be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.**” God was saying that He chose to distribute His Divine Mercy to the Jew *to the exclusion of* the rest of the people of the whole earth.

Deuteronomy 10:14&15

14 Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.

15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.

Isaiah 45:4

For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

John 17:6-26

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

1Peter 1:1&2

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Now we may not *like* what the Scriptures clearly teach about Sovereign Mercy, and we may be offended by it, and we may even reject Sovereign Mercy, and refuse to believe in it. But what we cannot do is change it. God manifesting His Absolute Sovereignty in His Creation by having Mercy on whom He will have Mercy is recorded in the Holy Bible from cover to cover hundreds of times in both the Old and New Testaments. So if we are to be Biblical at all in our Theology- we must deal with this very important and profound issue. God manifesting His Sovereignty in His Creation through the distribution of His Mercy is a Divine Revelation- that while patently offensive to human reasoning is nonetheless a firm Biblical Truth. So we are left to struggle to make sense of it- because as Bible believing Christians- we *cannot* ignore it.

But what of those who are not chosen? They do not receive Sovereign Mercy- but they receive Sovereign Justice. They are in fact sinners and willfully and repeatedly sinned against God, and so God gives to them what they *deserve*- and what they have worked hard to receive- God's Just and Holy Wrath against their sin.

Romans 9:11-33

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Romans 11:1-25

1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

- 8** (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.
- 9** And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompence unto them:
- 10** Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.
- 11** I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.
- 12** Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?
- 13** For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:
- 14** If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.
- 15** For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?
- 16** For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.
- 17** And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;
- 18** Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.
- 19** Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.
- 20** Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:
- 21** For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.
- 22** Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.
- 23** And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.
- 24** For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?
- 25** For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

So what we have is that one group of rebellious, sinful, and unworthy people receives the Sovereign distribution of God's Justice while the other group of equally rebellious, equally sinful, and equally unworthy people receives the Sovereign distribution of God's Mercy.

But while it is true that some sinners receive Justice and others receive Mercy- nobody *ever* receives Injustice from God. Those who receive Justice

manifestly *deserve* the Justice that they are given (because they are guilty of being transgressors of the Law), while the others manifestly do *not* deserve the Mercy that they are given (because they are transgressors of the Law as well).

So God's Justice against sin is *vindicated* by the Damnation that guilty sinners receive and God's Grace is glorified in the Sovereign distribution of Divine Mercy to unworthy sinners.

Ephesians 1:5&6

⁵ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

And that makes God to be both Just and the One Who Justifies.

Romans 3:26

To declare, I say, at this time his (God's) righteousness: that he (God) might be just (in the distribution of His Damnation of guilty sinners), and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (those to whom God has Sovereignly chosen to distribute Mercy).

Sovereign Mercy is the Determiner

We must understand that the determining factor as to why *some* rebellious sinners get Justice while other rebellious sinners get Mercy is not *anything* that the individual has or has not done- nor any personal quality or inherent goodness that the individual does or does not possess- but all people receive a manifestation of God's Own Sovereign Will.

Exodus 9:8-17

⁸ And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

⁹ And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt.

¹⁰ And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast.

¹¹ And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

¹² And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

¹³ And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

¹⁴ For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth.

15 For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.

16 And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

17 As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?

We must understand that the people who receive Justice at the Hand of God are not necessarily more sinful than those who receive Mercy- and those who receive Mercy are not necessarily more holy than those who receive Justice. In fact- those who receive Mercy may actually be *more* sinful than those who receive Justice.

But we can all be grateful that the moral condition of the individual is *not* the determining factor as to why some receive Mercy from God while others receive Justice. The determining factor is in how God Freely and Sovereignly *chooses* to display His Glory on that individual- whether through Mercy or through Justice.

But the fact remains that nobody *deserves* Mercy- every single human being on earth has sinned and *all* deserve eternal Damnation.

The one true living God of the Bible is never evil, wrong, sinful, or arbitrary in the distribution of either His Justice or His Mercy. God *purposely* chooses those unworthy sinners to whom He will show His Mercy- and the rest receive Justice. And the criteria on which God's Mercy is distributed is God's *alone*- and is made *before* these people are born and have the opportunity to do any good or evil thing.

Romans 9:11-15

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

God Can *Never* Be Obligated to Man

Now one of the areas where we must guard our hearts is in how we answer these questions: "*Does God owe Mercy to anyone? Is anyone entitled to God's Mercy? If God gives Mercy to anyone- is He not then obligated to give Mercy to everyone? And if so- how does it remain 'Mercy' and not become an 'Obligation'?*"

One of the principal Truths about Sovereignty is that God is *always* in the *superior* position and Man is *always* in the *inferior* position. God is *always* the "Giver" and Man is *always* the one who receives. God *cannot* in any way sin against His Own Holiness and ever be in an inferior position with His Creation.

Therefore- God can never be *obligated* to Man. God never *owes* Man *anything*; Man can *never* be in a position where he commands God or is entitled to receive *anything* from God. God is *always* free unencumbered and God graciously and mercifully does wonderful and good things to Man (who is always unworthy) only because God freely *chooses* to do so.

Does this Make God to be Unfair?

It is certain that the Scriptures reveal that God is *not* Fair- at least not in the human way of thinking about that term. But as we teach that the Scriptures declare that God is not Fair- we do *not* mean that Scripture reveals that God is unfair. What we do mean to say is that Scripture reveals that God is infinitely *better* than Fair.

The one true living God is not concerned with having to live up to some arbitrary human standard of "fairness". God is concerned with being the Supreme Sovereign of the Universe- Who deserves to be glorified and worshipped.

Since all humans are guilty sinners- if God operated on fairness- wouldn't all people simply be condemned? How would *anyone* be rescued from Eternal Damnation if God operated in Fairness? So without Mercy (which is never owed, deserved, or obligated)- *nobody* would be saved.

If Mankind were to receive only what they are owed and what they are entitled to receive- all would perish in the Lake of Fire because all are guilty of being transgressors of the Law. So rather than be offended that God is not "Fair" we should praise God that He isn't.

We must remember that *nobody* is entitled to receive Mercy from God, and if that is true- then for *anyone* to receive Mercy displays the Glory of God's Goodness. But then we need to ask and answer the question,

"If God so chooses to distribute Mercy to some but not all- does that make God to be unrighteous (unfair)?"

And how you answer this question depends on how Biblical your understanding of The Absolute Sovereignty of God is.

Romans 9:14-26

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

© 2001-2011 by The Covenant of Peace Church. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America

The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729 www.covenantofpeace.net

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from The King James Version © 1977 by Thomas Nelson Publishers. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a Study of **The Doctrines of Grace**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

Recap of Part 3

1. What is the Theological Definition of Mercy? _____

2. What is a good "working definition" of Mercy? _____

3. What does **Exodus 33:19** and **Romans 9:15** mean? _____

4. Why is it that Mercy cannot be earned by us or obligated by God? _____

5. Did everyone in the Bible who needed Mercy receive it? _____
6. Why or why not? _____

7. What does this Truth teach you about us "presuming" on the Mercy of God? _____

8. How is the Justice of God vindicated? _____
9. How does Mercy glorify God? _____

10. Is this Truth something that the New Testament initiated? _____
11. How was this Truth about Mercy revealed in the Old Testament _____

12. On what personal quality or deed of Abraham did God give Mercy? _____
13. Did God give this Mercy to all of Abraham's children or relatives? _____
14. How did God choose to reveal Himself to Moses? _____

15. Why did God makes this distinction about Himself? _____

16. What does the term, “above all people that are upon the face of the earth” in **Deuteronomy 7:6** mean? _____

17. What is the determining Factor as to why some unworthy sinners receive Divine Justice while other unworthy sinners receive Divine Mercy? _____

18. True or False: Those to whom God gives Mercy are more holy than those who receive Justice.

19. True or False: Some who receive Mercy could actually be more sinful than those who receive Justice.

20. Finish this sentence: God gives Mercy to some; Justice to others- but nobody gets _____.

21. How do you answer the question: *“If God gives Mercy to anyone is He not obligated to give Mercy to everyone?”* _____

19. Is God unfair? _____

20. Explain why or why not _____

21. What was the Apostle Paul's answer to this question in **Romans 9**? _____

22. How has this Teaching about Divine Mercy conflicted with what you have been taught in the past? _____

Bonus Question:

How is it useful for a believer in the 21st Century to be presented with such deep and profound Truths about God's Mercy? _____

Super Bonus Question:

In **Exodus 33:18**- Moses asked to see God's Glory. Explain how God's response to Moses in **Exodus 33:19** answers the question about God's Glory? (Hint: read John Piper's Sermon) _____
