

Psalms 103:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

Analysis

This verse quotes God's self-revelation to Moses (Exod 34:6-7), central to Israel's understanding of God's character. 'Merciful' (rachum) and 'gracious' (channun) emphasize God's compassion. 'Slow to anger' (erek appayim, literally 'long of nostrils') and 'plenteous in mercy' (rab chesed) demonstrate patience and abundant covenant love. These attributes ground all theology—God's essence is gracious love, not vindictive judgment. Christ perfectly embodies these attributes, demonstrating God's character in human form.

Historical Context

This formula recurs throughout the Old Testament (Num 14:18, Neh 9:17, Ps 86:15, 145:8, Joel 2:13) as Israel's core confession of God's character. The context in Exodus 34 followed Israel's golden calf apostasy, emphasizing God's grace toward sinners.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Which of these divine attributes do you most need to experience in your current circumstances?
2. How does your understanding of God's character shape your approach to prayer?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה	וְיָחַד	יְהוָה	אֶרֶךְ	אֶפְסֵי	וְרַב	חַסְדִּים
is merciful	and gracious	The LORD	slow	to anger	and plenteous	in mercy
H7349	H2587	H3068	H750	H639	H7227	H2617

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 86:15 (Grace): But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

Joel 2:13 (Grace): And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

Psalms 145:8 (Grace): The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

Nahum 1:3 (References Lord): The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

Psalms 86:5 (Grace): For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

James 5:11 (Grace): Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Jonah 4:2 (Grace): And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto

Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

Numbers 14:18 (Grace): The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

Isaiah 55:7 (Grace): Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Psalms 130:7 (Grace): Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.

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