

# Psalms 145:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

## Analysis

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This verse celebrates God's character through multiple attributes: 'The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.' The word 'gracious' (Hebrew 'chanun') signifies kindness, favor, and benevolence shown freely. 'Full of compassion' (rachamim, from rechem, womb) indicates the deep, tender mercy of a parent toward a child. 'Slow to anger' (erek appayim, literally 'long of nose') is a Hebrew idiom expressing patience and forbearance. 'Of great mercy' (rav chesed) emphasizes abundant, covenantal loyalty. This verse synthesizes multiple theological affirmations into one declaration. Rather than presenting God as a tyrant demanding submission, it reveals His nature as fundamentally kind and compassionate. The progression from grace to compassion to patience to mercy moves from general benevolence to specific expressions of relational care. This portrait of God's character provides the theological foundation for approaching Him in prayer and worship. God's slowness to anger means His judgment is measured and not reactive.

## Historical Context

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This verse echoes Exodus 34:6-7, where God revealed His character to Moses after the golden calf incident. That foundational revelation established that despite Israel's rebellion, God's essential nature is compassionate. The description appears throughout the Psalter (Psalm 103:8) and across prophetic literature (Nahum 1:3, Joel 2:13). During Israel's exilic and post-exilic periods, when national suffering seemed to contradict God's merciful nature, this verse maintained theological

affirmation. The repetition of these attributes in Jewish daily prayer (Kiddush Levana, the blessing over the new moon) indicates the liturgical and devotional significance of this characterization. In first-century Judaism, contemplating God's compassion provided comfort in the context of Roman occupation. Early Christians would have resonated with this portrait of God as gracious and merciful, which corresponds to New Testament revelation of God's character through Christ.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean that God is 'slow to anger' in a world where injustice and evil often seem to go unchecked?
2. How do God's compassion and patience relate to His justice and judgment?
3. Why does the psalm emphasize God's merciful character rather than His power or majesty at this point?
4. In what ways does recognizing God's graciousness change our approach to confession and repentance?
5. How should the understanding that God is 'full of compassion' affect the way we treat others in His image?

## Interlinear Text

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יְנֻנִּי	וְרַחֵם	יְהוָה	אֶרְאֶה	אֶפְאַחַח	וְגָדֹל
is gracious	and full of compassion	The LORD	slow	to anger	and of great
H2587	H7349	H3068	H750	H639	H1419
:רַחֲמֵי					
mercy					
H2617					

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.

**Psalms 103:8** (Grace): The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

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

**Psalms 100:5** (Grace): For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

**Psalms 116:5** (Grace): Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

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