

## The Truth About Mercy, Pt. 1

Ronald Weinland

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Today we're going to begin a new series. This series will address the subject of mercy, but not in a way one might normally think. I'm really looking forward to giving *Part 2*, and I'm just giving *Part 1* today, because to me it's fascinating, some of these things that God gives to us from time to time.

This series is entitled *The Truth About Mercy*.

Again, it's a unique subject because some of the ideas and things that have come out with that particular word isn't really what was used in context in many places in the Old Testament at all, and in the New. And again, there are a lot of different ideas about it— "being merciful," or "showing mercy" – and in the right context it's great, but in a wrong context, it's not so great. That's what we're going to look at today, to see how some things have been messed up and why and how they came about.

So, what is mercy? Again, it actually entails a lot, and it isn't really understood very well. It's a word that is actually associated more with the Catholic Church, Protestantism, and the Jewish religion as well with the concepts about God and about Christ. And because of that, we know that such ideas or concepts are most generally mingled in confusion and distorted with false concepts and false ideas. That's the case here.

Knowing its origin can help us begin to grasp that it's a word that has originated out of the Catholic Church long ago, therefore it hasn't been handled very well. The word actually is known to have its origin in medieval Latin. That says a lot. So often mercy is seen in the context of showing compassion or a willingness to extend leniency toward someone who deserves judgment and/or punishment. That's where it got its basis, its beginning.

That doesn't mean that's how it's being used today as a whole, and we have a fairly good grasp. But I think after going through this series you'll see that there is more to the word that we should think of when we think of that particular word, and especially in connection to God and then to mankind.

So again, it has to do with thinking in a lot of cases in times past, in some of its roots, for those who deserve judgment and/or punishment for wrong that they have committed. A lot of times they bring up the fact that in courts or a judge may pass down "mercy" to someone who deserves something greater. That kind of derives then, again, from some of these ideas that go way back. Which is fine in some cases, obviously, (I didn't get much) for the wrong that they've committed and that's fine if God's in the picture, if it's something that has total unity and oneness with God, but primarily even from God and Christ, because after that it's a lot more difficult.

So often, again, incredible how some of these things are used in a context of showing compassion or a willingness to extend leniency, like I said, and those things are good if that's your heart and your desire toward someone else, but you've got to think of the other aspect that has to do with judging.

But in cases where such things are determined, judged by individuals who should be able to "see" the great potential for error, we should be able to see the great potential for error in that just because of the way it says here, because of judgment, the word judgment. Why? Because man's judgment is not so good. That's something we have to work on within the Church with God's spirit in us in order to change and come into greater unity with God. Because it has to come from an agreement and unity with God to be right and righteous.

Mankind isn't righteous. Our ability to judge is based on very carnal things sometimes (most of the time), and not on principles and truth that comes from God. That's the problem with even understanding this and being able to handle it properly, the way it's meant in scripture.

So, therein is the problem to truly understand what is being said in scripture about or when we read the word "mercy." It's because of mankind, because of our nature. So again, as a whole mankind's judgment of others is flawed because, again, mankind of itself is unable to exercise right judgment of others.

We have a battle with that. We all have a battle with that at times, and the closer we get to God, the more our judgment and thinking can come into unity with God. And in that regard, this is a very important subject to understand about judgment, that it has to be in unity with God. Because if it doesn't come from God, if it comes from us, it's flawed. If it comes out of our selfish human nature, it's flawed and there are going to be weaknesses in it. Only God can understand us or help us to understand righteous judgment, and thereby only God can teach us how to live in truth toward others.

Let's turn over to Psalms 86. Let's begin there. In truth, "mercy," the word or what is being said about it in scripture, is based on God's love, agape. That's closer to what it's all about. More than in His judgment. Because that too is based on God's love, but within the context of His plan and purpose and His law.

Psalms 86:1. And this is a prayer to David, recorded as a prayer to David and therefore, obviously, a psalm that's recorded here.

**Psalms 86:1—Bow down Your ear, Eternal, and hear me, for I am humbled and in need.** Now, this is a correct translation. Certain words have been used sometimes that just give a protestant flare to some things and the lack of understanding of certain words in context of things being said, and of some of the words, whether it be in Hebrew or Greek in the New Testament.

So, here he is speaking about the fact that he's been humbled. He sees certain things. He understands certain things about the need to be humble before God, and that's what he's saying, "and in need." The word having to do with "want," "in want." And so, the reality is when we have pride, our pride is showing

we aren't in want, we think we already know, and we don't need God. We do whatever we think is best or whatever we think is right. David here is humbling himself by what he's saying and what he's addressing and crying out to God about in his prayer.

**Preserve my life.** "Preserve, keep, watch over my life." That's what he's asking. He's asking God to be involved in his life. He wants God in his life. That's what he's saying. Then it says in the King James, "**for I am holy.**" Well, that's not what it's saying at all. That's a total mistranslation. Some of these things so disgust me, how they've recorded things, how they've written things. He's not saying he is holy in any fashion or form. That word has been misused over and over and over again in the Old Testament.

So, it's saying, **Preserve my life in doing/being good.** He wants to do what is right. It has nothing to do with being set apart for holy use or purpose. He's just saying, "I want to do what is right. I want to do what is good." He recognizes this comes from God and so he's asking God for help, to help watch over him, to help preserve him in this, that he be able to think in those terms. "Preserve my life to doing/being good," "to being kind" is another translation of this, "to being kind."

**My God, deliver your servant who trusts in You!** So, he recognizes things that are wrong in himself, he recognizes he needs help. That's why he starts out by saying he's been humbled; he's coming before God and asking these things.

**Be merciful to me.** Now it's a word that means more in the terms in the Hebrews of "gracious" or "give favor." **Be gracious to me, give me favor.** That's why we go before God to receive favor. We want favor. We want God to look down upon us and bless us and help us with the things we need in life. Because "mercy" sometimes gives a different twist to this in the sense of what's written here.

**Be gracious to me, O Lord, For I — it's not "cry" — I call upon you/unto you daily.** What an awesome thing. That's something we should all do because we know we need God; we know we're in want and we know we need help.

**Make glad the life of Your servant,** or it could even be translated in the sense, **Delight in Your servant.** So, he's asking for this help, and with that help from Him then indeed because he's changing, he's desiring that God delight in that in him. And after all, it's recorded he is a man after God's own heart. It reveals that thinking, that mind, his attitude.

**Make glad the life of Your servant, for unto You, Lord, do I lift my life. Lord, it is pleasing unto you to be ready to forgive, and filled** — it says, "**with mercy**" again, but again, this is not so much of a word as "mercy" as it is a word for "kindness" or "loving kindnesses." "Compassion" is how it's used a lot in Hebrew, compassion, loving kindness. He desires that relationship with God.

**Unto all those who call upon You. Give ear, Eternal, unto my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplication (favor). In the day of my trouble, I will call upon You, for You will answer me.** So again here, as we go through this, we're going to see the word "mercy" can be fine but when you see the

words and what they really mean, this is more the intent in the context of what's being said and stated. It's about a relationship with God.

It's not always about punishment. It's not always about how bad we are, in that respect, yet we know that. We know we have sin. He said, "Yet you delight," or "It's pleasing unto you to be ready to forgive." It's just up to us to repent. And so, that's the relationship. David had a confidence in that. He knew that God was very forgiving, and that comes from love. And so, he goes on. Again here, this is about a relationship and the desire to have this relationship with God that is filled with our receiving of a loving kindness from Him.

Then dropping on down, **verse 15—But you, Lord God, are compassionate and gracious, enduring long, and of great loving kindness** is really what it's saying. It's not "mercy" in the context of how we think about it. If we have a relationship with God, we already know He's, in that sense, extended mercy to us. He's extended His love to us.

I think of how it's used here in the context of how we've talked in times past that God doesn't pour out His love upon this world, but He does upon those He calls. He can't give His love yet to those in the world because they're cut off, because they've never been called, because they haven't been forgiven of their sins, they haven't been addressed, they don't have God's spirit working in them. It's a part of God's plan and God's purpose that that's to be offered in the Great White Throne as a whole, for the past six thousand years, except for those who will live into the Millennium and begin to have the opportunity to learn it then.

Then God looks forward to pouring out His love upon mankind and giving this opportunity to all of mankind. But in the first six thousand years it just can't be that way. I hope we understand that deeply, and not only understand it but agree with it with all of our being, to see the beauty of it, of God's plan and purpose for letting mankind have his own government in six thousand years to prove to mankind you can't do it. Look what miserable, sick, perverted job you've done!

Do you think people think that way who are in politics? About their job and what they're doing? They can't change things. They won't change things. They get caught up in a certain side and it's just back and forth battles constantly. The very definition creates division. The very definition and use of it creates division. But what else does mankind have? Well, God lets them try the best, do the best things you can.

This is probably one of the best forms of government that's ever existed for mankind, and now look where it is. We're ready to go down the toilet. Really is. To me, it's scary. If things were to go on without God's intervention, to realize that we're peaking a point here where we're passing over from fifty percent and more of people turning to socialism, turning to a communist kind of mentality and idea of the dividing of goods and so forth. And how great has that been for the world?

And you think, how sick that something like that could happen? It sickens me when I hear these things, it really does. It hurts me inside because I think, what a horrible thing. We should be able to take that further to realize what has happened to their minds that they're thinking this way? And how many can really be helped when it's all said and done, when they're resurrected or if they live into the Millennium?

Because there comes a point like in the days of Noah that people's minds became so distorted and perverted, so unsound they became set in that, and they will never repent just as much as Lucifer (became Satan) will never repent. It doesn't matter what was offered to him, it's not his mind, it's not his will. He's spirit. He's set in that. But it can happen to the mind in human beings as well. That's an awesome thing we can understand. And when that happens your hands are tied. If God's spirit can't help someone, nothing can.

**But You, Lord God, are compassionate and gracious.** You see, it has more to do with that. It's the way God is. But people who wrote or translated things in the Old Testament didn't see God that way. They got rid of that part because they didn't comprehend that part because of their concept about gods, that sometimes they are very angry with human emotion. God does not have human emotion of that kind of anger. Never, never, never, never! He will execute righteous judgment and if need be, destroy and kill, but it's not out of anger.

Displeased, hot displeasure because of what they're doing? Yes. Because it's hurting others, it's hurting others of His creation and it's a frustrating thing. But to hate? To have great anger to where it's almost uncontrollable because you are God you can be angry and lash out and it's then about punishment and harsh judgment because you're a hard God? That's the Old Testament concept. "You're a hard God. You require too much of us. We can't do that." Well, that's true. You can't. That's why you're to look to Him. But they didn't understand those things.

A vengeful God? That word there needs to be nipped in the bud as well. It hasn't been used right in scripture. God seeking revenge on others? God doesn't seek revenge! It's kind of like this concept of somebody going to hell and you're going to be tormented for all your life. That's the concept. That's where it comes from. That's what they choose to believe, that that's the kind of God that created everything, a God that just if they're going to be disobedient, they're going to pay for it. For all eternity they're going to be in this fire and these little things are going to run around with these hot pitchforks punching them in the butt or whatever it is, branding them constantly, searing them, hurting them.

You think, well, if you're resurrected that way, you'd have to be physical for that to happen, and their concepts of being somewhere else generally don't fit that scenario so I don't know how they turn up the heat and have this hot place and all this stuff going on. It's like they're jumping over lava ponds, and you know, whatever.

You know, the mind of mankind is sick, perverted, distorted. That's what led to some of these things here, distorted. I remember walking through – one time was enough – that big old cathedral there in

Rome. And you look at the paintings and you realize, “I want out of here!” Really! It’s almost like how I explained when three of us at Ambassador went into this place and they are “speaking in tongues” as one woman is crying out and you just want to get out of the building. It’s like where can you put a door in the wall or something and get out of there as quick as you can?

That place was the same thing. I mean, weird, perverted, sick images. You take a child through there and it’s going to scar their minds. If you gave them a daily diet of that kind of picture, that it’s about God and the angelic realm or whatever, and you think, weird, weird, weird. It’s these concepts that distort people’s minds toward the Great God and what He’s truly like, a God of compassion, a God of kindness, loving kindness as the word is used.

**But You, Lord God, are compassionate and gracious, enduring long and great in loving kindness or goodness...** “Goodness” is a term that’s used over and over ...**and truth.** All goes together. That’s what truth is.

**Psalms 33:4—For the word of the Eternal is right.** See, mankind’s isn’t. That’s what has to change. This mind has to change in order for our words to begin to become right, our thinking to become right. **For the word of the Eternal is right, and all His works are done in truth.** So, it’s a matter of knowing what the truth is because that’s God, that’s God’s plan, that’s how He functions.

**He loves righteousness and judgment.** Right judgment, they go together, righteousness and judgment, righteous judgment. Because they go together. But other kinds of judgment, hmm, nope. That’s the way of mankind. That’s the way of Lucifer who became Satan, his kind of judgment that’s distorted. Because it’s that kind of mind, of things he judged God and things that God does and things that God and Christ does and has done and things concerning the Church.

**He loves righteousness and judgment. The earth is full...** Now, here it quotes it as “goodness.” **The earth is full of the goodness or loving kindness of the Eternal.** So, they pick and choose what they translate when they do it and it’s like, no, let’s stick to what the core of it’s all about.

**Psalms 136:1—Give thanks to the Eternal who is good. For His goodness (or loving kindness) is forever.** It’s not about mercy being forever. God has a plan, and in that plan mankind has the opportunity in time to become Elohim. No need for mercy. No need for judgment after that. Awesome.

**Give thanks to the God, the Elohim of Elohim.** That’s what it says, “Thanks be to the God of the Elohim of Elohim.” In other words, He’s Elohim and He is the Family, and everything that becomes a part of that Family, well, God has a plan for its growth. Christ is the only one there with Him in Elohim now.

**Give thanks unto the Elohim of Elohim, for His goodness is forever.** Sometimes I can’t help but think about (don’t think too long on it because we don’t know), it’s like, God hasn’t even begun to show us what happens after that hundred years. He hasn’t revealed anything. Now, at some point He’s going to begin doing that.

Perhaps during the Millennium, perhaps within the God Family, perhaps then in the last hundred years. We really don't know. But at some point, He'll begin revealing various things about His plan into time, especially as we approach the end of that process. Because that's how God reveals things, in a progressive revelation. There are certain things, candidly, I believe with all my being we can't even begin to grasp until we're in the God Family. That's how great they are.

We are so small. We are so puny. And to be able to grasp some of the things that are of God, of His plan and purpose of why everything exists out there, well, that'll come later on. But to be awesome beyond imagination, it's definitely going to be that and so much more.

**Give thanks unto the Lord of Lords, for His goodness is forever. To Him who alone does great wonders, for His goodness is forever.** That's what it's about. It's not about this thing of trying to keep people in a state of thinking about mercy and sin and so forth. Because we learn that very quickly in the Church. We know what we are. We know we're selfish and we know that's where the battle is, so we know what to fight.

That's good that we know that because if we didn't understand that we'd just suffer more. But God gives us the ability to see these things that we can begin to work upon and to realize this mind can begin to actually be transformed to think differently, to become more in one in unity with God. That's beautiful, it really is, His goodness and what it produces.

**For His goodness is forever. To whom by wisdom made the heavens.** There's a lot said there. **Who by wisdom made the heavens, for His goodness is forever.** So, those things are going to continue through time, no end, the things that God had planned, the things that God has purposed. Because everything is out there for a purpose. It just wasn't thrown out there, "Eh, I think we'll stop now." You know, you get to a few billion, trillion, whatever it is galaxies, we don't even know yet because they keep finding more. The light hasn't got here yet, and we don't grasp those kinds of things.

How great is it? We have no comprehension. But all, all a part of a plan in ways we can't even begin to think about it because we can't even grasp how big it supposedly is right now. Out to 13.5 billion light years away. Chew on that one, knowing how fast that is, how long it takes for it. It means something that was created out there 13.5 billion years ago the light is just now getting to the earth. I don't get it. I get it as far as how long it takes to get here, but that's about it.

So, God has a vast plan all done in goodness. It's exciting. It's inspiring. All for a right purpose. That's what this is all about.

**Psalms 103:1—Bless,** and the word has the meaning in it here as well, "to kneel." So, it's about our attitude toward God and our desire toward God and to recognize here the awesomeness of God Almighty. **Bless the Eternal with my life, and all that is within me to His holy name. Bless the Eternal with my life and do not forget all His benefits.**

So again here, knowing that this is what it's all about. This is the attitude of mind we're to have toward God Almighty. Not to forget. Since our calling, can you remember all of His benefits, all that He's done, helped you in changing things in your life, helping this mind to change and think better, differently in the right way?

**Who forgives your iniquity, healing your diseases.** "Your sicknesses" is what it is, **healing your sicknesses.** Human nature, human beings without God, we're sick. We're diseased on a spiritual plane, we really are. Selfishness is not good. Selfishness decays, destroys, corrupts, creates drama. So much so in this society, it lives on it. "I love drama!" You know, people that get so hooked on some things that it's like they can't get away from drama, and the more drama there is it's like the more exciting it is and it's like, "Give me a break!" This probably causes a lot of heart problems.

**Healing your disease, your sicknesses.** That's what God does. Most people stop here with physical things. No, sometimes we come down to the point where God allows us to have an experience everything else that's in the world when it comes to sicknesses, cancer, whatever it might be. There are things we can learn through that process. Not to discard it. I think of a sermon you're going to hear during the Feast that I just heard last night, prerecorded, and reminds me of some of that. That there are things that God allows in human life that hurt, that are a matter of suffering, but God can use them to create and use for something far, far greater, and far more meaningful, which has to do with this mind through the power of His holy spirit.

So, whatever we go through in life God can use. This is something Satan doesn't grasp. God can use to our benefit. It's kind of like the story of Job. God allowed Satan to do various things and then God produced far, far more. So, He used adversity, God did, to help create something that otherwise couldn't have been created in Job. Awesome. So, which is better?

**Who redeems your life from destruction.** So, we talk about that. We talk about how great it is we are brought out of Egypt. We understand what that means for us, to come out of sin, because that's where it begins. It starts with the Passover. That's why it's in the beginning before the Holy Days because that's where it starts. We know that's where it started for us and so we're excited by that, we're thankful for that, we're grateful for the benefits, the things that God gives to us, and that He did that to us, whatever it took to get us to that point to where we'd come to repentance and want to be baptized, to be able to see ourselves for what we are and say, "I don't like this. I don't want this. I hate it and want to bury it in a watery grave." Sometimes we have to go through a lot to come to that point in life, to understand "I need, and I want God," because that's the only way it's going to get accomplished.

**Who redeems your life from destruction.** The disease, the sickness, because that's what happens with carnal human nature, with selfishness.

**Who crowns you with loving kindness.** Same word that's so often translated, again, as "mercy," here with "loving kindness," with goodness. That's what God does. That's what He crowns our life with. What



does it mean to be crowned with mercy? So, they didn't translate it that way because it doesn't really fit. Think about that.

**And**, as it says here, **tender mercies**. So, now they grab another word a while ago that we used, "compassions," "compassion." And we should be that way, compassionate. Because we, just like in the context of "mercy," shouldn't think about it in that way when we think about relationships with one another because if that's the context then we're judging, and that's a problem. We don't have the right to judge God's people. We know the judgment the world is under, and we have to be careful in that sometimes.

That's why Christ said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing." Stephen said basically the same thing and that should be our attitude. But the problem comes in within the environment of the Church over the past two thousand years. Because we're the ones, "Judgment now is upon the House of God." Once we're called, that's when judgment begins.

**Who satisfies your mouth with good.** That's what it's about. God helps us with that, to grow in that. **So that your youth is renewed like the eagles. The Eternal makes/works righteousness and judgment.** God does, thankfully. Thank God that He does that, and it's not left up to man.

**The Eternal makes/works** (as the word is), **righteousness and judgment for the oppressed.** God shows us the way out of that. That's what His desire is, to bring us into His Family. Because everything with human nature and human government and the human world of mankind is oppressive. It's just the way it is.

**Verse 7—He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts under the children of Israel, the Eternal...** Again, I'm not going to use the word "merciful" here because it's really not about that. **The Eternal is compassionate.** That's who He is. He's filled with loving kindness. That's what everything is based on and how He works with us.

He doesn't beat us over the head. He doesn't remember our past sins when we ask for forgiveness. Sometimes because we're human we have a difficult time. Some people still beat themselves up. But we have to grow in a right way, in a spiritual way, to understand that in time we can let things go. When we've gone before God in sincerity and truth and repented the past is gone! It's forgotten! It's not held against us anymore! What an awesome thing to understand! Why? Because God is compassionate. He has that mind, that attitude, that spirit that's based on His love. That's just the way He is, thankfully.

**...compassionate and gracious, slow to anger.** It's not how the world, or especially some of those religions when they were getting started, looked at God. They saw Him in a totally different way, as being an angry God. Because they had angry gods they believed in. Amazing.

And even how Israel was dealt with, people read those stories and it's like, "He's an angry God." You think, no, He isn't, just working with a lot of human beings, mankind, that hate God, that don't want to live that way of life, that don't want His purpose in their life. They don't want to live by the law.

They would rather go out and commit adultery and fornication all day long. That's what they were doing. That's why Phineas came along. Even after they were told to stop and quit doing the things they were doing and brought this woman into the camp in front of everybody, in front of the leaders, and went to their tent. And so, Phineas took a javelin (spear) and took it in and rammed it into both of them at the same time. Just let your imagination go where it will there, how he did that. Isn't too hard. Because that's where their minds were. It's like, "We don't have to obey God. We can do this. Others are doing it." To where you become emboldened in it and then bring it before God.

That's why sometimes things happen in the Church and people start judging certain things and they say, "Well, 'so-and-so' did that," and they don't realize that people repent (if they know of something that someone did that was wrong). That doesn't justify anyone else doing wrong or whatever it might be that comes into the mind about justification.

It's like that old thing of tithing and giving offerings to God or sending in second tithe like I know hasn't been happening like it should be. I know that! And to me, that's atrocious, sick, because that's God's! When do we see that? Some don't. Some haven't. It's God's! It's God's for you to use, and if you don't use it, it's God's. Anyway, didn't mean to go off on that but that's what happened, okay, on down.

So again here, **He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel. The Eternal is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous** (bounding in, filled with) goodness (loving kindness). It's just repeating it, basically here, that this is what this compassion is based upon. He's compassionate because He's filled with goodness and loving kindness. It's based on His love!

**He will not always...** Some of these words! ...**chide**. What comes into your mind when you think of "chide?" **He will not always chide with mankind** or strive with mankind. It's about striving with mankind. It's not about punishment. I think of the word "chide," maybe I just don't have it right, but to me, it's like a punishment. It's not about that.

It's about this thing that God has been doing for six thousand years, striving with mankind. The patience of God, that just cries out patience. Because of why? Because of His goodness. He's compassionate. He knows what we are. He created us this way. He created us to be selfish. Awesome!

But how far man goes with that sometimes, scary. Because not all do. We're created with the ability of good and evil. Not Godly good, but people who come to a point where they realize killing is not good, they don't want to be a part of it, so much so they don't even want to go off to war. And they'll stand their ground, and they'll be put in prison, whatever, because they don't want to go out and murder other people.

**He will not always strive with mankind.** So, we understand that. God has a plan. It comes to an end. There comes a time when things get better. Starts with the Millennium. But it's still going to be some striving with mankind in there because why? Because it's mankind. Selfish human beings. But now it'll be under one government and one Church in the world. They're going to be a lot easier to work with.

**Neither will He keep...** Now, this is interesting here. **He will not always strive with mankind, neither will He keep....** The word, it says, "**His anger,**" but see, here we go again, that's even been added. It's in italics. That's not there. It's just saying, **Neither will He keep...** The word here "keep" is the word for like a "caretaker." It's like it's used when it's talking about a vineyard, taking care of a vineyard, or a caretaker of a vineyard and what they do. Here it's being used in that context. **And neither will He be,** in essence, **a caretaker forever.** Because of mankind.

So, God has done a lot to care for mankind. Six thousand years of it in spite of our nature, in spite of the way we are. He destroyed mankind at one point except for one family through Noah, and then started again. Lessened the lifespan of man, thankfully. You know, I can't comprehend... I'm sorry, but I really, really, really can't comprehend how evil, how sick, how perverted people had to be after nine hundred years. I hope we understand that.

I'm so thankful we don't live that long! Get me out of this! Give me relief! The way human beings treat each other after that length of time, they became so expert in deception, in evil, truly. That's why God destroyed everything. We're to learn from that. Be thankful you don't have to live that long. I could say more but I'll stop.

So again here, it's interesting at this point to point out how the early Church of Rome viewed God and taught about Him. So often, this word "keep" here, about being a caretaker or taking care of is used. The early translators injected the concept that God is filled with anger toward mankind and seeks to chide or to chasten mankind, that that's the motivation.

It's just a matter of a relationship being a god, and it's a distorted thinking that people had about gods in the first place, that all they want to do is correct us and chasten us and punish us and that's their motivation because they're gods and they're just angry. They're angry with the way we are and the way we live life and so they look for things to hurt us. Think, what a sick, sick mind.

Let's turn over to Nahum. Nahum, we don't often go there. It is in the Old Testament. Nahum 1. This is another one sometimes that gets me. When you know that God Almighty is agape, He is love, that's what He is. His motivation for everything is a kind of sacrificing love that we have to learn about in this human form with His holy spirit, and it takes time to grow in that, to really comprehend and latch on to that more and more.

And so, when you know that, when you read some of these things, they're kind of irritating because it's putting down God. It's picturing God in the wrong way. This is what has been done by that church and by

people for so long because they just don't get it, what God is really like, what everything He does is based upon.

Nothing is done out of selfishness. Nothing is done out of vengeance. I don't like that expression anymore, "Vengeance is mine, says the Eternal." It's not about being vengeful. It's not seeking revenge on people. That isn't what God is like. If we understand what God is like, we'll know what He's saying. I'm disgusted with that word, really am, because of how so often things come into the mind. It's like we deserve to just take revenge upon those who have come after us.

That's not what it's about. It's about judgment and the execution of righteous judgment from God. It's not about this motivation just to get revenge on somebody. That isn't God. But there is justice done in the right way because it's righteous and from God.

**Nahum 1:2—God is jealous.** That's what it says, "God is jealous." You know, some of these words they're there because of human emotions and the way we are. And so, that's the only way people could think about God in many cases. They see a certain word and so to them it means He's jealous.

What does that mean? Well, it's not like we think of in weak, human terms, because our motivation sucks, is evil, as a whole, when it comes to jealousy. People become jealous over stupid things! Because of what? Because of self. "Should just be me!" I hope you understand what I'm saying because "It's about me." That's how we think. And so, people become jealous of someone else or whatever it might be. And again here, there are things that happen sometimes in life that may cause someone to be irritated and put out with someone because of what they've done and how they've done it, but jealousy, well, that's a human thing. Because it's natural with human beings.

Not with God. It isn't a motivation of God unless you understand it in the right context. It's better to use the word "zealous," because He's zealous for His people. He's zealous for His purpose and His plan. Because the reality is nothing is going to interfere with it. It's going to be done no matter who agrees with it or not. It doesn't really matter because all who don't agree won't be a part. That's happened in the angelic realm and it's going to happen even more here before it's over with, and it's happened with mankind and will happen more.

**God is zealous, and the Eternal "revenges."** See, because of this concept of jealousy and so he's the revenger. He seeks revenge. Think, if God was like that you think people would last very long? It wouldn't take very long to wipe out a whole bunch really fast and do it on a regular basis. We wouldn't have any enemies at all ever! Well, that's not the way it works. Or in the future, He's going to keep it in until finally it's time to smack and destroy? That's not what it's about. That's not God's motivation and God's desire. He wants to see people come to repentance when the time is offered, to receive mercy, the right kind of mercy that's from Him. That's the only context that's really good because it's about giving, again, of His compassion and His love to them.

**...and the Eternal revenges.** It's about being righteous in judgment. That's what the word has to do with, righteous in judgment and the execution of, if you will.

**The Eternal**, again, **avenges**, but not in the way we would normally think. If we associate that with human thinking, we're wrong, so it has to be understood in the context of God. So, "avenges" is a better word than "revenge," but it still isn't there. But we have to understand what it's saying. But to use that kind of a word, there is nothing wrong with it if we understand what it is.

**...and is**—notice this—**and is furious!** God is furious! No, He's not. You know, people that did that translating, well, I don't think too well of them. I think they should have been slapped around a little bit. But that's me. I would like to have done it, but that would have been my human emotion, not God's, because God didn't slap them around. He let them do it, and it's messed up a lot of people.

A lot of people have been messed up by those kinds of things, those kinds of ideas that have been perpetuated through time just as much as the trinity or anything else. It gets into the mind, and it messes people up because that's what they hold on to. They don't know anything else.

**The Eternal avenges, and is...** It's not the word "furious." It's the word for "owner" or "lord." Now, isn't that sick? That they would take that word and put "furious" in that because that's the concept they have. "He's jealous, and He's furious. You don't want to mess with Him! You don't want to get on the wrong side of Him. Okay?" That's how they thought. What a sick religion that would be.

We see the results of it. Hell is one example, again, heaven is as well because it's wrong. Everybody isn't going to heaven. People aren't up there on clouds when they die, somewhere, wherever those clouds are. They're not up there fishing or playing golf for the rest of their life.

You want to talk about being bored. You know, to be out there, what kind of a life would that be? Some people retire and they just want to golf all the time. Well, that's fine if that's what excites you and you get some exercise, I'm glad for you. But that's not me. I would get so sick of that after a while. "I am sick of seeing the same course day after day, swinging and hitting the same ball in the wrong places." I'd be destroying so many "heavenly clubs" cause I lose so many "heavenly balls" up there and banging them around all over the place and they're not going where I want them to. Of course, when you're up there maybe you always hit a hole in one. And how boring would that be? You couldn't miss.

You know, that's how some people think. I'm sorry, but these concepts are so stupid. "Joe, he loved fishing. He went out several days of the week. He loved it so much. He'd just live on that boat if he could. And I know he's up there living on a boat and he's catching those great, big spirit fish, taking off the spirit scales and eating them in the evening because he just loved those trout or walleye or whatever it might be." You think, I mean, really?! That's pretty pathetic to be so dumb. I'm sorry. Even on a physical plane why can't someone stop and think?

I mean, you hear this at funerals. People do. They talk that way sometimes. "He always loved golfing, and I know he's doing it, he's up there and he's on those... I don't know, are they greens? They're clouds. I don't know. It's going to be interesting to find out when we get there because I want to golf too."

Anyway.

**The Eternal avenges**, if we understand what it is, **and is owner, Lord**. It's like this word having to do (that we just read) about a caretaker, because this is what it's about. God has given us everything, taken care of everything for us.

**The Eternal will take vengeance**. So again, the far more perfect translation of this, truly, is "executes judgment." Thank God He does. Thank God it's from Him because it's based on (something that David came to understand), God is filled with love. God does things from love. Very compassionate, long suffering, filled with loving kindness. "I'll put my life in His hands." Remember the judgments that were offered to him?

**...and takes "vengeance" or executes judgment** (as it should be) **on His adversaries**. That's the bottom line. He executes judgment on his adversaries. Everyone that doesn't want God, everyone that hates God, everyone that hates His way, this is what they meet in time because God is righteous and because there is that which cannot be allowed to be a part of His Family. And either we're at one with that and desire to be at one with that and not just going through the motions because we're trying to say this, but because we believe it and want it in agreement with God and therefore, that's why we're motivated to do it, because we recognize that God is a God of love, loving kindness and compassionate.

He executes judgment on His adversaries. So, we understand that, and we understand the process through even the Great White Throne when most of that is going to be poured out on the earth.

**...on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath.**" See, that concept again, "jealous," "furious," "wrath." Because it's about human beings and how we really are and how we think, and if we think there's a God like that because it's steeped in things of paganism and the way people have always thought about gods and how they are. And you read some of the beliefs of people that they had about different gods and god families because a lot of them, Zeus and I don't know who else was along with him, but they're filled with a whole bunch of them in the family and they're all screwed up.

Then they perpetuate that kind of thing with God and it's like He's all messed up and He's just furious and angry all the time and you don't want to get on the wrong side. No, He's filled with mercy... I even have trouble with... I'd rather say compassion and loving kindness because that's what it's about.

**...and His adversaries. And He reserves...** It's that word "keeps." This word "reserves" is the word "keeps" as a "caretaker takes care of," in essence, "His enemies." Interesting, because it uses it in a different context here because it's about His enemies. He takes care of it. How? His righteous judgment. It just said that. That's what it's about. He takes care of His enemies. They're going to be taken care of as

a part of His plan that is based on agape. Awesome. Beautiful. Thankful that one day at the very end when there is no more human life, when it's all gone and there is only Elohim, what an awesome thing to know no more enemies.

Because there is a lot of pain and suffering in having enemies. It's like divisions today. There is so much division in the world. Country after country after country, they're more divided than ever before because of what's taking place. And there's a being behind all that stirring it up more. He has the tool of technology to help him. He's a master of it and he's using that, obviously, for the wrong purposes and has far more power than he had before the days of Noah.

So again here, we're going back to **Psalms 103:9—He will not always strive with mankind, neither will He keep, as a caretaker or take care of, forever. He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.** Why? Because of this mind, the way He is, a righteous God, a God filled with love, kindness, loving kindness.

**For as the heaven is far above the earth so great is His loving kindness or goodness toward those who fear Him.** That's what it's about because that reflects a mind that has repented, a mind that has been forgiven, a mind that is growing in unity and oneness with their God. And it talks here what God grants them. That's what God gives to us, loving kindness, goodness in life, of things we're able to experience in the Church of God, the Body of Christ as we grow in unity and oneness with Him, as we continue the process day by day of repentance when we see sin, when we see wrong attitude, when we see a wrong thinking or we've said something or thought something that's wrong and we repent of those things because we want this to work right. It's a battle.

**As far as the east is from the west so far has He removed our transgressions from us.** But we tend to think and so much of the world when they think about God, some of this is still a concept, but for us to understand we're free. After you repent of sin it's gone. What an awesome thing!

This is why some people sometimes don't grasp and haven't grasped and have had a hard time with certain correction that may be given at a certain time or they've done something really foolish and stupid as we all have done in our lives and perhaps corrected to whatever degree, perhaps to the point of disfellowshipment or perhaps to the point of a time where they're asked not to come back until they address certain things or whatever it might be.

And then to realize when they come back it doesn't have to be like this concept of a dog with a tail between his legs. Because sometimes people can feel so sheepish when that happens because it's like everybody knows what I did or whatever it is. The reality is anyone who has God's holy spirit in them, that is gone! And if someone doesn't have that gone as far as their attitude and love toward you and their receiving of you then something is sick in the mind that needs to be healed and they're in sin for doing that. The reality is, no, it's gone. See?

That's why I wish at all times that everyone in God's Church wouldn't feel that way around me or my wife, because sometimes people have a difficulty then. And the reality is we don't hold anything against you. We want you to succeed! We're thankful, we're grateful when people grow and change and progress. That's what God wants in our life! And so, if you yield yourself to that that's what you're going to think toward others. There is nothing about holding something against anyone ever.

What an awesome thing when you realize it's God doing that and there is nothing. And you can have a peace of mind and excitement and joy – a joy – because you know God and what He's like. Not with some of these crazy ideas but with what's true.

So, let's look at how some of the same approach has been used in the New Testament. In a lesser way and I'll explain some of that as we go through it, but the term "mercy" in the New Testament gets closer to more accurate usage in the sense of usage and I think it's easier for us sometimes to read those things and recognize it. But please understand when that's used in a concept toward man it isn't so good. I mean, really, because we're far from righteous judgment and this is what it's based upon. Okay? How we respond toward others, how we act toward others. It's still about love. It's about God's love.

And even in the New Testament, we find more because it was revealed in a greater way. God began to show His love. He didn't explain it the same way in the Old Testament though David understood it was incredible loving kindness that comes from God. But he didn't grasp the word "agape." He wasn't taught about that. He wasn't taught what John taught in His writings and what John was given because John was given the most of all about God's love to record for the Church, to teach to the Church. Awesome! John, 1<sup>st</sup> John, 2<sup>nd</sup> John, 3<sup>rd</sup> John, incredible what it says. But it reveals that mind of God.

So again, in a lesser way, but the term "mercy" in the New Testament actually gets closer to the accurate usage, if you will, of such a term because of the manner in which it's used.

So, let's turn over to Ephesians 2. Always understanding it's about agape. That's what it's based upon when it's using this word. Sometimes stated in different ways – compassion, loving kindness. To understand agape is a little bit more.

**Ephesians 2:1—Now, you who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in times past you walked according to the course of this world.** So, we know our history. We're taught these things in the Church. You're dead in your trespasses. What an awesome thing to be able to go under that watery grave and come back up and live with God's spirit through the laying on of hands. Awesome, the change that can begin to take place.

"Wherein in times past you walked according to the course of this world." I'll never forget. I'll never forget what I was like and what led up to my baptism, what led up to my desire to want to go to services every Sabbath, to want to go to my boss and say "no more," regardless of what happens, what he does,



because it doesn't really matter. You do what is right before God because you begin to learn to put God first, obey God. That's where it all starts.

**Wherein in times past you walked according to the course of this world.** Just like everybody else without God or God in our own concept of what we thought about Him but not true.

**According to the prince of the power of the air.** We learn about that then, this being that can broadcast. I loved it when Mr. Armstrong, Herbert Armstrong, began to teach some of those things and help us to learn. Because of technology, we could begin to understand it, this broadcasting that he does, and to understand because of what God gave to him, the spirit essence that God gives to us in the human mind that has a spirit essence in it but not the holy spirit and this impregnation that can take place.

To realize there is a being that can broadcast to that spirit because he's a spirit being. God communicates to us in the mind. People would rather have a fiery bush and someone talking to them. And I think of some of those interviews I've done in times past. "Well, how did God talk to you," and they mock some of those things, "Was it out of a bush," you know, or something. I mean, that's how foolish people get. And it's like, "No, I got an email." Just kidding.

I wish I'd have thought of that back then. "I got an email!" "It has to be right, I read it on the internet! It just popped up one day!"

**Wherein times past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.** So, we learn that. Who is that? It's everybody in the world. They're doing their own thing. In their way, they know what they know and how they judge and so forth and basically, no one is going to tell them what to do and how to do it. And you look at politics. I hate turning on what they call the news stations, but I still torture myself because I do it every day. What is wrong with me? Want to see something different? No, just keeping up on certain things and hoping. Every once in a while, they might put a blurb of some real news that's happening in the world, but it happens very seldom.

And so, anyway, you think of how they live, how they think, and the divisiveness that's out there, the hatreds that are out there. It's incredible!

**...in the children of disobedience.** But everybody as a whole thinking they're right. You can't convince anybody. People believe what they want to believe, it doesn't matter what it is. Doesn't matter what you say. That's why sometimes there's no point of even saying anything to try to explain something because they already have their minds made up. That's how people are. Their minds are really already made up.

That's what's scary right now. A lot of them have their minds made up to do something that to me is shocking. Because if people can't see socialism and understand what it is, if people can't see certain traits and certain things that are there, I think, what's wrong with perhaps now the majority of the minds of this country? That's scary stuff to me.

This is how the world changes at times in ways that are atrocious. Europe and things that happened with Germany and going on and on. Because people just would rather continue in their nice, cozy, little area and think that everything is going to be okay, so they ignore certain things that are happening, just like countries ignored what was happening to the Jews before WWII began, before it really got off to a big start. And so, the Germans went after them and then they went after different people in different churches and different ideas, that had different ideas. And you think, that kind of thinking is pretty bad, pretty evil, sick.

**...among whom also we all had our conversation.** It's a word that means "conduct." **...we all had our conduct.** I know what I was like before I was called. That's why I wanted to change when God helped me to see what we're supposed to be and what we're supposed to do and how we're supposed to think.

I think of that first year. I'll never forget it. One stage after another and making certain choices to get away from certain environments. I knew that as soon as I went back to the same college that I was in that I had to quit, and I had to get out of there and move to some other area and get away from all of them. Because if I got in that environment again, I knew what would happen by carnal human nature, and I wanted to get as far away.

That's the way we have to be. You have to flee. You have to get away. To obey God, that's the most important thing.

**...among whom also we all had our conduct in times past in the lust of the flesh.** So, we know how we are, the lust of the flesh. Huge motivation for human beings. **...fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.** Lust of the flesh, lust of the mind, the way we think. Pride. Incredible.

**...and were by nature the children of** – it says "wrath" but it's basically a word for **evil**. "Children of evil" because everything that goes a different way than God's is evil. That's why we were made this way. We were made selfish to come to understand it's evil. "I reject evil. I reject selfishness. It's in me. I don't want it. I loathe it and I hate it, and I want to battle it, and I keep battling." That's the way we have to do, it's just our life, and thankful when it's going to be over.

**Verse 4—But God who is rich in mercy...** Again, it's more closely associated in our understanding with the word "compassion." God knows what we are. That's why He desires when He begins to call us that we choose Him, that we choose what He's offering us, baptism, to be forgiven of sin so He can love us, so He can pour out more love upon us because He's called us to be a part of His Family.

That's an awesome calling beyond our comprehension. Something we should be so incredibly thankful for all the time. "I was called. I know what I was." We have no idea. He has a purpose. Yield ourselves to it, thank God.

Let's look at the word "compassion" because this is what this is about. "Recognizing the suffering of others and taking action to help." That's God. He knows the suffering we've gone through as human

beings, but He has a plan when He will call us out of that suffering. He knew that mankind would suffer horribly for six thousand years.

There is no other way to create Elohim. It's such a marvel to understand the beauty of God's plan. It's hard. It was difficult. It was hard for Him to see His own Son be treated as he was, especially in that last three and a half years, and especially at the end of that three and a half years, to see what he had to go through. His own begotten Son. And yet willing to do it as He has been for all mankind for six thousand years because there's a way and a plan whereby when it's God's time and what's best for us, we can have an opportunity to begin the process of becoming a part of His Family by choices.

So again, recognizing the suffering of others. "Recognizing the suffering of others and taking action to help. It's a tangible expression of love for those who are suffering or in need." "A sympathetic consciousness of other's distress together with the desire or taking of action to help alleviate it." Beautiful definition. Because when it comes to our calling and change, this reflects God and how God has worked with us, truly.

**Verse 4—But God who is rich in compassion.** Rich. It's not just about this concept we have of mercy. **But God who is rich in compassion for His great love,** agape. It goes together. It's where it comes from, the compassion, the goodness, the way God works with us. It's based on agape.

**...wherein He loved us. Even when we were dead in sins, He made us alive together with Christ.**

Incredible! That's a God of great compassion and of love that's hard for us to grasp that kind of love. That's why sometimes even because of human family and relationships and because of concepts that some people have of a father that sometimes that has held people back in their development and growth in a right mind toward God Almighty. Because human beings are so far from having any qualities of God. Because they can't help it. That's just they're selfish human beings.

We look forward to a time we're all able to be part of a family that has this mind. And as a family that goes so far beyond anything we could ever grasp in human relationships, really.

**Even when we were dead in sins, He made us alive together with Christ. By grace are you saved.** We know where that grace comes from. It's about patience, longsuffering that God has, the things that God pours out upon us, the favor He gives to us, the forgiveness of sins He grants us on a continuing basis because we're begotten of His holy spirit.

**...and has raised us up together and made us to sit together in heavenly in Joshua the Christ.** This really has to do with once we're impregnated with God's spirit God has raised us up for the purpose of sitting in, to inherit all things with Christ, and that's what awaits us. That's what it's talking about. In all that comes from God, heavenly, that He's planned and purposed for us.

**...that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and kindness (goodness) toward us through Joshua the Christ.** All a part of the plan and purpose. Incredible.

**Verse 8—For by grace you are saved through faith.** So, I love expressions like this when we understand the definitions. God gives us the ability to believe; He gives us the truth. We choose whether we believe it. And if we choose to believe it and be in unity with God then we begin living by it, we grow, we begin to grow in understanding.

This is a matter of faith because we start living what is right and we begin understanding God more, and His plan, and His purpose, and His truth.

**...saved through faith, and that not of yourselves but the gift of God.** God gives those things to us. He gives us the ability to actually live by faith. Once we've chosen to live by it, we have to pray about being able to do it and keep it up. We have to pray for help to live it, to live what we have been given to believe, and God is in it all the way. That's what this is about. It's the gift of God. He's there to help us.

That's why we've gone through those sermons about prayer and fasting, because God is there to help, we just have to ask for it because we know we need it, we want it, we know... We humble ourselves before God because we know we need it. We want to be of a humble spirit, not filled with pride and haughtiness, doing our own things and ignoring God and thinking we can do certain things ourselves and go through the motions of being in the environment of the Church and somehow, we're all okay. Then we realize, no, the majority leave. That's the truth.

**...not of works lest anyone should boast.** It's not about pride, if you will, and thinking that by the things we do that somehow, we desire something or should receive something or we begin to make a show of it or want to be seen of others because of it or whatever.

**For we are His workmanship.** Because it's a part of His creation. He has to work with us. He has to work with this mind to transform it if we yield ourselves to the process.

**We are His workmanship created in Joshua the Christ.** We can't be created outside of that. It's because we're in the Body of Christ, in the Church of God, not just in the environment or the courtyard, but we're in it spiritually.

**...created in Joshua the Christ unto good works.** To produce fruit. That's what this is about. And we can only produce fruit like it shows us in John 15 so clearly, to be a part of the vine and to be connected in the right way. Because with God's spirit that's all it can do is produce fruit, and we're able to be recipients of that.

**...unto good works which God had before ordained that we should walk in them.** What an incredible plan before anything was created. I just love what God has revealed to us about these things, that before anything was created, period, when it was just God He had blueprints, if you will, plans, everything designed for a purpose and it was going to be upon His Son first and foremost, and then for the creation of mankind who would be able to in time become a part if they so chose, if they were so given that opportunity.

God's purpose was that we would walk in a certain way, have the ability to walk in a certain way through Joshua – be forgiven of sin, and then because we seek to dwell in God, we seek God to dwell in us and Christ to dwell in us. Beautiful. Beautiful. Beautiful.