

### Receiving God's Mercy

By David DeWitt

*But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-7).*

***But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us.*** Paul based our salvation on God's **mercy** (some sort of compassion) which is a **work** (or a characteristic) of God, based upon God's **love** (unqualified giving), which is an **attribute** of God. The difference between a work (or a characteristic) and an attribute is that attributes are always present. God is always loving (doing the best good) but not always merciful to everyone (as in the times of judgment, say at Noah's Flood, the destruction of Sodom, and the dispersion of the Jews, or the upcoming tribulation period or the Great White Throne Judgment). But I would rather call it a **characteristic** of God. It is something that God is, in the sense that He might be merciful at any time, but He only applies mercy selectively.



***Even when we were dead*** [hopelessly separated—remember, death is a permanent separation] ***in*** [or *by reason of*] ***our transgressions*** [better, *trespasses*, walking in the wrong place], God did three things for us. These are presented in the Greek aorist tense, as a timeless fact, yet all have a future fulfillment. For believers, they are positionally present, but experientially future.

1. ***Made us alive together*** [instead of being permanently and therefore hopelessly) separated from God, we are joined] ***with Christ (by grace you have been saved)*** [which Paul will discuss in depth in the next sentence]), ***and***
2. ***Raised us up with Him***, just as we have not yet experienced being made alive (we will still die) we have not yet experienced our resurrection (we are still in a physical body), ***and*** [God also]
3. ***Seated us*** [placed us in His presence] ***with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*** [Our destiny is in another dimension called the heavenly *places*. (There is no word for *places*. But heavenly demands it because it is an adjective).]

All these are future, yet God sees them timelessly, as if already completed.

The reason God did all this for us was ***so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*** Once again, it's all about God and what He is doing to demonstrate His own character.

#### APPLICATION

We should realize we received the mercy of God because of God's love for us. Is there anything we can do for God? Answer: **Yes, we can please Him and not grieve Him.** Does God need anything? Answer: No. He doesn't need anything, and He doesn't need anything done for Him (vv. 4-6). **But just because God does not need anything done for Him, does not mean we cannot do anything for Him.** Goodness does not require need. My grandson made a huge "Happy Birthday Papa" sign for me. I didn't need it but I liked it. He did something for me even though I didn't need it.