

God, Who Is Gracious and Merciful

Scripture Reading — Nehemiah 9:28-31

You did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God. — Nehemiah 9:31

History is full of powerful rulers with hearts of stone. Tamerlane rampaged across Asia during the 14th century, leaving towers built of the bleached bones of people he had massacred. Stalin consolidated his power in the Soviet Union by a reign of terror, unrestrained by the most elementary laws of morality. Hitler's holocaust stands as a symbol of maniacal cruelty, eliminating millions of Jews and people of other "inferior races." Mao Tse Tung declared that he wouldn't care if half the population of China died to establish a communist state, and tens of millions died in the process.

The fact that God is almighty doesn't automatically make him worthy of worship. But the tenderness, mercy, and love of God, together with his almighty power, lead us to worship him.

Objectors often say that if God were almighty and perfectly good, he never would have allowed evil to enter the world. Of course, if we were privy to every aspect of God's plan before creation, we might be able to give some kind of answer, but we weren't. Still, look at how patient God was with the Israel, though they sinned again and again, and how merciful and forgiving he has been to us in Christ. God is loving, not cruel, in the exercise of his almighty power. That should lead us to trust him, even though we can't understand everything about the problem of evil.

Prayer

Almighty and merciful God, full of love toward undeserving sinners, teach us to trust you even though we don't have all the answers to our questions. Amen.

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