

Interpretation of “Lord Have Mercy” (Part I)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



“Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me” or, more briefly, “Lord have mercy” was given to Christians at the time of the apostles and was appointed for them to say without ceasing, as, indeed, they do. But what this “Lord have mercy” means is something that very few people know today and so they say it in everyday speech, pointlessly, alas, and in vain. They don’t receive the Lord’s mercy, because they don’t know what they’re asking. This is why we should know that when the Son and Word of God had become incarnate, was made a human person, underwent such suffering and was crucified, shedding His most holy blood, He ransomed people from the hands of the devil. Since then He was been the Lord and Master of human nature.



Of course, even before His incarnation He was Lord of all creatures, visible and invisible, as their Creator and Maker, but not of those people and demons who, of their own volition, didn't want Him as their Lord and Master. Our good God made people and angels free and endowed them with reason so that they would have knowledge and discretion. This is why, because He is just and true, He didn't want to remove this freedom from them and to rule over them against their will. Those who accept His rule, He does indeed govern, but those who do not, He leaves to their own devices.

This is why, when Adam was deceived by the apostate devil, and himself apostatized from God and didn't wish to comply with His commandment, God left him alone in his freedom: because He had no wish to become a tyrant. But the envious devil who deceived him in the first place, didn't stop deceiving him thereafter, until he'd made him like the dumb beasts and he lived like an animal, without reason or sense. God took pity on him, however, and so He lowered the heavens and descended to earth as a person, for people. And with His most pure blood, He redeemed us from slavery to sin, teaching us through the Holy Gospel how to live in a God-pleasing manner. And, according to Saint John the Theologian, He gave us the ability to become children of God.

Through baptism, He gives us a new birth and re-shapes us, while, with His spotless sacraments, He nourishes our souls on a daily basis and invigorates them. In a word, with His great wisdom, He found a way to be inseparable from us for ever, as we are with Him, so that there's now no room inside us for the devil. Some Christians, however, even after the many gifts they were granted and after the many blessings lavished upon them by Christ the Lord, were again deceived by the

devil and did his will instead of God's. They're not completely insensitive, however, to the extent that they don't realize the evil that's befallen them.

They acknowledge their error and recognize their enslavement, but are unable, by themselves, to get rid of it. So they hasten to God, saying "Lord have mercy", so that our merciful God will take pity on them, have mercy on them, welcome them like the Prodigal Son and give them His divine grace again. Through this grace they can rid themselves of their enslavement to sin, escape the clutches of the demons and thus live a God-pleasing life, observing the commandments of God. So these Christians who, as we've said, say "Lord have mercy" with this in mind, will always receive the mercy our good God and will take His grace, so as to be able to free themselves from slavery to sin and to be saved.

But those who have no idea about this matter, whether they don't understand that their behaviour is in thrall to the flesh and to the things of this world or don't have the opportunity to consider their enslavement, still pointlessly say "Lord have mercy", just from habit. How it is possible for them to receive God's mercy? Such wonderful and infinite mercy. It'd be better for them not to receive God's mercy at all than to do so and then lose it again, because then they'd be twice to blame. Besides, if someone gives a precious stone into the hands of a little child or some uncouth person who doesn't know its value, and they lose it, it's obvious that it's not they who've lost it but the person who gave it into their hands.

[To Be Continued]