

Goodness and Severity of God

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Romans 11:22 states: “Behold then the goodness and severity of God.” In context, the apostle Paul recounted that God was severe toward His chosen people, Israel, because they “fell” in unbelief. In His goodness, however, He accepted the Gentiles because of their faith, but warned that, if they fell, He would also reject them.

This history demonstrates a fundamental aspect of God’s nature: The balance of mercy and justice. Men tend to view God in extremes, either as a mean, wrath-filled ogre Who makes arbitrary judgments and delights in our sufferings or as a cosmic Santa Claus, utterly indulgent, never calling anyone to account for his sins or errors. Both extremes are equally flawed. The Bible provides ample illustrations of both the goodness and severity in the Divine Nature.

The Goodness of God—

- He created mankind in his own image, sinless, capable of responding to His will, and with immortal souls that can live with Him eternally (Gen. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 15:51-54).
- When Eve and Adam sinned, God announced His plan to provide a Savior (Gen. 3:15).
- He worked through various persons to create the right time and conditions to send our virgin-born Savior (Gal. 4:4).
- He revealed the Bible through inspired men (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and placed in the Gospel the power to save (Rom. 1:16).
- He offers salvation to all, greatly desiring that all be saved from sin and Hell (Mat. 11:28-30; 2 Tim. 2:4) through their faith and obedience (Mat. 7:21; Mark 16:16; Heb. 5:9).
- The death of His Son on the cross for our salvation is the ultimate proof of His goodness (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).

The Severity of God—

- He drove Adam and Eve from Eden and placed a curse upon them because of their sins (Gen. 3:16-24).
- He destroyed the world by a flood because of its exceeding wickedness (Gen. 6:5; 7:4).
- He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wickedness – sodomy (Gen. 19:24-25).
- He caused Nebuchadnezzar to take His people into captivity because of their idolatry and apostasy (Eze. 7:8-9).
- He will pour out His wrath against all sin at the Judgment (Mat. 7:22-23; 25:41, 46; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 The. 1:7-9).

God will be “good” or “severe” to each one, depending on the response of each one to His revealed Word (John 12:48).

[**Note:** This article was written for and published in the *Denton Record-Chronicle*, Denton, TX, June 27, 2014.]

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