

Are You Aware of God's Holy Severity?

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God is gracious, loving, and merciful to those who repent and obey Him (Romans 5:8-10; Hebrews 5:9), but there is another side of God that many refuse to acknowledge—the severe side of God that hates sin. The following warning was written to Christians: *“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off”* (Romans 11:22). If one cannot understand why God did the following things to the following people, he does not have a proper understanding of God's just, holy nature.

- If one does not understand why God sentenced Adam and Eve to death because of one sin they committed, he does not understand God's holy nature (Genesis 3).
- If one does not understand why God once killed everyone on earth except eight faithful people, he does not understand God's holy nature (Genesis 6-8).
- If one does not understand why God killed the inhabitants of several cities because of sins like homosexuality, he does not understand God's holy nature (Genesis 19:24-25; cf. 18:16—19:29; Jude 7).
- If one does not understand why God killed Nadab and Abihu for altering just one part of worship, he does not understand God's holy nature (Leviticus 10:1-3).
- If one does not understand why God sentenced well over 600,000 people to death for refusing to obey His command to take the promised land, he does not understand God's holy nature (Numbers 13-14).
- If one does not understand why God commanded that a man be stoned to death for gathering sticks in violation of the old sabbath law, he does not understand God's holy nature (Numbers 15:32-36).
- If one does not understand why God would not allow Moses and Aaron, the leaders of His people, to enter the promised land, he does not understand God's holy nature (Numbers 20:7-12,22-29; Deuteronomy 34:1-6).
- If one does not understand why God killed 50,070 people in Beth-shemesh for looking inside the ark of the covenant, he does not understand God's holy nature (I Samuel 6:19-20; cf. Numbers 4:5,15,19-20).

- If one does not understand why God killed Uzzah while he was transporting the ark of the covenant in the wrong manner, he does not understand God's holy nature (II Samuel 6:1-7; cf. Exodus 25:14; Numbers 4:15,19-20; 7:7-9).
- If one does not understand why God killed Ananias and Sapphira for telling a lie, he does not understand God's holy nature (Acts 5).
- If one does not understand why God commands withdrawal of fellowship from impenitent children of God, he does not understand God's holy nature (Matthew 18:17; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 5; II Thessalonians 3:6,14-15).
- If one does not understand why God will send many people to eternal torment, he does not understand God's holy nature (Matthew 25:41,46; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 14:11).
- If one does not understand why even some baptized believers will face God's "*fiery indignation*," he does not understand God's holy nature (Hebrews 10:26-27; cf. 3:1, 10:23-31; Galatians 5:4; II Peter 2:20-22, etc.).

More examples could be given, but remember that the nature of God does not change: "*For I am the LORD, I change not...*" (Malachi 3:6; cf. Hebrews 13:8). The Godhead has always hated sin and always will. The following was written about Jesus: "*Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows*" (Hebrews 1:9). Christ and God the Father think alike, and God is "*of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity*" (Habakkuk 1:13). God also wants men to hate sin (Psalm 119:104,128; Romans 12:9), but those who love sin and persist in it are constantly making God angry: "*...God is angry with the wicked every day*" (Psalm 7:11b; contrast "joy" after repentance in Luke 15:10). May we all examine ourselves and make sure that we are not the ones grieving God and making Him angry! (II Corinthians 13:5; Ephesians 4:30). Let us "*...serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire*" (Hebrews 12:28b-29; cf. 10:23-31). Those who serve God faithfully have no need to live in fear of His wrath, but should look forward to being lovingly welcomed into Heaven (Matthew 25:34; II Timothy 4:6-8; I John 2:3-4; 4:17-18).

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