

Romans 11:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God—chrēstotēta kai apotomian theou (χρηστότητα καὶ ἀποτομίαν θεοῦ). The word chrēstotēs (χρηστότης, "goodness/kindness") and apotomia (ἀποτομία, "severity/sharpness") present God's dual character: merciful yet just. Paul calls Gentiles to behold (ide, ἵδε), to contemplate both aspects simultaneously. **On them which fell, severity**—unbelieving Israel experienced apotomia, God's sharp judgment. **But toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness**—Gentiles experience chrēstotēs, but conditionally.

The condition: **if thou continue in his goodness** (ean epimenēs tē chrēstotēti, ἔὰν ἐπιμένῃς τῇ χρηστότητι). The verb epimenō (ἐπιμένω) means to remain, continue, persevere. Perseverance in faith is necessary. The warning: **otherwise thou also shalt be cut off** (epei kai sy ekkopēsē, ἐπεὶ καὶ σὺ ἐκκοπήσῃ). Corporate Israel was "cut off" for unbelief; Gentile Christianity faces the same risk if it abandons faith for pride and presumption.

Historical Context

Church history demonstrates this warning's validity. When Gentile Christianity became triumphalistic, self-righteous, and apostate, God's judgment fell (the Reformation addressed medieval corruption; liberal churches today experience decline). God's severity is as real as His goodness.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do we hold together God's goodness and severity without diminishing either attribute?
2. What does it mean to 'continue in His goodness'—is this about works or faith?
3. How does this warning against corporate apostasy differ from (or relate to) the doctrine of eternal security for individuals?

Interlinear Text

ἴδε	οὖν	χρηστότητι	καὶ	ἀποτομίαν	θεοῦ·	ἐπὶ	μὲν	
Behold	therefore	goodness	also	severity	of God	on		G3303
G1492	G3767	G5544	G2532	G663	G2316	G1909		
τοὺς	πεσόντας	ἀποτομίαν	ἐπὶ	δὲ	σὲ	χρηστότητι	ἐὰν	
G3588	them which fell	severity	on	but	thee	goodness	if	G1437
	G4098	G663	G1909	G1161	G4571	G5544		
ἐπιμείνης	τῇ	χρηστότητι	ἐπεὶ	καὶ	σὺ	ἐκκοπήσῃ		
thou continue	G3588	goodness	otherwise	also	thou	shalt be cut off		
G1961		G5544	G1893	G2532	G4771	G1581		

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 3:6 (Parallel theme): But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Hebrews 3:14 (Parallel theme): For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

1 Corinthians 15:2 (Parallel theme): By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

John 15:2 (Parallel theme): Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Revelation 2:5 (Parallel theme): Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Hebrews 10:23 (Parallel theme): Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

John 8:31 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

Galatians 6:9 (Parallel theme): And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Acts 14:22 (References God): Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Romans 2:7 (Parallel theme): To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: