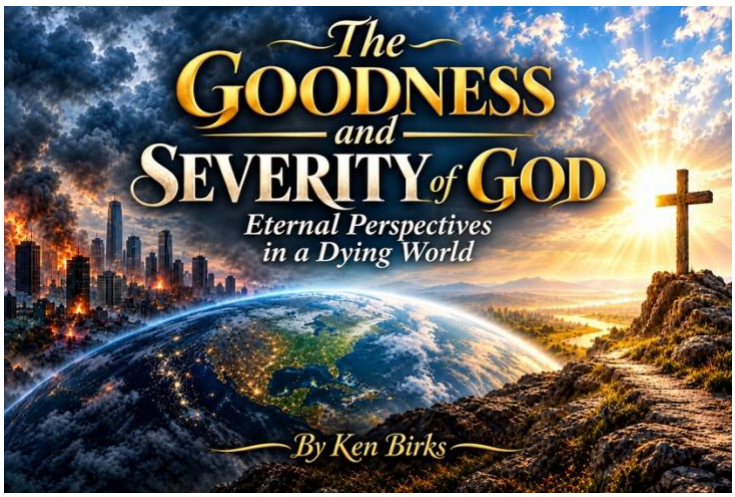
The Goodness and Severity of God
Eternal Perspectives in a Dying World

By Ken Birks, Pastor, Bible Teacher, Author



As we look around the world today and witness the growing unrest, moral confusion, violence, division, and uncertainty that seem to touch every corner of society, we can see seeds being sown for a coming harvest. This may not be the harvest many expect, but it is one that God can use to draw people from every nation, culture, race, and social class to Himself. As Christians who have submitted our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we must be prepared to recognize the times and respond obediently to His call.

Everywhere we turn, we see evidence of a dying world searching for answers. Terrorism, war, economic instability, rising crime, political turmoil, attacks on the family, increasing hostility toward biblical values, moral relativism, human trafficking, addiction, and widespread anxiety have left many people fearful and broken. At the same time, cultures that were once influenced by Christian principles are increasingly rejecting biblical truth and embracing beliefs that stand in direct opposition to God's Word. Followers of Christ are finding themselves marginalized, criticized, and, in some parts of the world, openly persecuted for their faith. Yet none of this has caught God by surprise. In fact, the darkness that seems to be spreading across the world is creating an unprecedented opportunity for the light of Christ to shine brightly. As the signs of the times continue to unfold through social unrest, violence, confusion, natural disasters, spiritual deception, and growing resistance to Christianity, God is preparing His people to stand firm in faith. What appears to be a perfect storm of adversity may very well become the stage upon which the Church demonstrates courage, compassion, truth, and unwavering hope.

Throughout history, some of the greatest moves of God have emerged during seasons of hardship and persecution. As hostility toward the Gospel increases, faithful believers have the opportunity to rise above fear, boldly proclaim Christ, and offer the hope that only He can give to a hurting world. The harvest ahead may be birthed through difficulty, but it

will reveal the power and faithfulness of God in ways that bring many searching hearts to Him.

The purpose of this devotional is to encourage us, as God-fearing Christians, to maintain an eternal focus amid the moral confusion, cultural opposition to biblical truth, political division, fear, and uncertainty that characterize our age. If we are to rise as overcomers and allow the light of Christ to shine through us, we must be fully immersed in the eternal perspectives that include both the weight of God's eternal glory and the weight of eternal damnation. Paul reminds us in his letter to the Romans, *"to consider the goodness and severity of God."*[1] To maintain an eternal focus that includes both the goodness and severity of God requires being firmly rooted in the message of the cross.

The gospel is not merely the good news of what we are saved unto; it is also the good news of what we are saved from. It proclaims both the promise of eternal life and the rescue of sinners from eternal judgment. In an age that often minimizes or ignores the reality of hell, believers must not lose sight of the warnings Jesus Himself repeatedly gave. Out of love and compassion for lost humanity, Christ spoke plainly about the eternal consequences of sin, emphasizing the immeasurable value of a soul and the urgency of genuine repentance. Jesus declared: *"If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire."* [2]

The sobering words of Jesus reveal the seriousness with which God views sin and the eternal destiny of every person. They remind us that eternity is not a theological concept to be debated but a reality that awaits every human being. The same Savior who lovingly invites us into His kingdom also faithfully warns us of the consequences of rejecting Him. To embrace His grace while ignoring His warnings is to embrace only part of His message. As the days grow darker and the birth pains intensify, the Church must recover both a vision of heaven and a reverent awareness of judgment — the goodness and the severity of God. The promise of eternal glory gives us hope, while the reality of eternal separation from God gives us urgency. Together, these truths compel us to pursue holiness, persevere through tribulation, and boldly proclaim the Gospel to a generation in desperate need of salvation. Only then will we be prepared to stand strong during these

[1] Romans 11:21-22
[2] Matthew 18:9

turbulent times and faithfully point others to the One who alone holds the words of eternal life.

As we immerse ourselves in these vitally important foundational truths, we become better prepared to stand strong during turbulent times. An eternal perspective anchors the soul when everything around us seems unstable. It lifts our eyes above the fears, trials, and uncertainties of this present age and fixes them upon the unshakable promises of God. The Apostle Paul understood this reality well. Having endured persecution, hardship, imprisonment, and suffering for the sake of Christ, he could confidently declare: *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."*[3]

Paul's words challenge us to view life's difficulties through the lens of eternity. Compared to the glory that awaits those who remain faithful to Christ, even our greatest trials are momentary. The pressures of this world may be intense, but they are temporary. The Kingdom of God is eternal. The suffering is temporary. The reward is eternal. The battle is temporary. The victory is eternal.

When our hearts are captivated by the eternal weight of God's glory and sobered by the reality of eternal judgment, we gain the strength to endure whatever lies ahead. Rather than being overcome by fear, discouragement, or compromise, we learn to persevere with faith, courage, and unwavering hope. We recognize that our present struggles are not meaningless interruptions to God's plan but instruments He uses to prepare us for eternity and to make us effective witnesses in a world desperately searching for truth.

As the birth pains foretold by Jesus continue to intensify, believers must learn to live not for the temporal but for the eternal. Those who keep their eyes fixed on what is unseen will be able to stand firm when others fall away, shine brightly when darkness increases, and participate in the great harvest of souls that God will draw to Himself in the days ahead. For those who endure to the end, the temporary sufferings of this life will one day give way to everlasting joy in the presence of the King.

Before all is said and done, believers may face difficult and even horrific circumstances prior to the return of Christ. Some will fall away and even deny Christ, while others will step into their God-given calling and become more than conquerors. What we are

[3] 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

witnessing in our world today may be alarming, but according to Scripture, it is only the beginning of the birth pains. When Jesus used this illustration of *"birth pains"* to describe the end times, He painted a vivid picture of conditions that would intensify as His coming draws near. Just as a woman's labor pains increase in frequency and severity before the birth of a child, so the troubles of this world will escalate before Christ's return.

The Apostle Paul addressed this very issue with the first-century believers in Corinth while enduring severe adversity and suffering himself. He reminded them that the power to endure trials does not come from human strength but from God dwelling within us. Paul wrote, *"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you."*[4]

What we see today is only a preview of what may lie ahead. Therefore, now is the time to prepare our hearts, deepen our faith, strengthen our convictions, and grow in spiritual endurance. God is calling His people not to fear, but to stand firm, keep their eyes on eternity, and remain faithful until the very end.

The purpose of this devotional has been to call God's people back to a holy awareness of eternity. We must resist the temptation to become consumed by the headlines of the day while neglecting the realities that endure forever. The Church must recover both the awe of God's glorious promises and the sobering certainty of His righteous judgment. A gospel that speaks only of blessing without warning, or judgment without mercy, presents an incomplete picture of God. Scripture reveals a coming day of awakening when every person will stand before the Lord and enter either everlasting life or everlasting judgment. As the prophet Daniel declares: *"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever."*[5]

The days ahead will require more than casual Christianity. They will require steadfast faith, courageous conviction, and hearts fully surrendered to Christ. Those who keep their eyes fixed on eternity will neither be shaken by cultural pressures nor deceived by the

[4] 2 Corinthians 4:7-12
[5] Daniel 12:2-3

spirit of the age. Instead, they will stand firm, walk faithfully, and become powerful witnesses to the lost, the wandering, and the spiritually weary. May we live each day in light of that coming day, remembering that every choice carries eternal significance. And may we be found among those who not only endure to the end, but who turn many to righteousness, shining like the stars forever and ever.

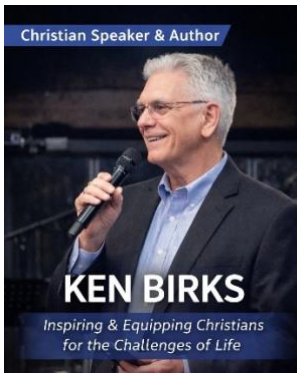
Jesus made it unmistakably clear when He said, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*[6] Likewise, the Apostle Paul exhorted Timothy, *"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."*[7] Scripture never promises believers a life free from suffering. Rather, it prepares us to endure trials with courage, faith, and steadfast hope.

Without a clear vision of eternity, it will be increasingly difficult to withstand the tribulations, pressure, and hardships that will characterize the end-time environment. Only when we grasp both the eternal weight of God's glory awaiting the redeemed and the sobering reality of eternal judgment awaiting those who reject Christ can we persevere with unwavering conviction. An eternal perspective strengthens weary hearts, steadies us through adversity, and keeps us from being swept away by fear, compromise, or deception. Yet God has not called us merely to survive these turbulent days. He has called us to overcome.

As we move forward in an increasingly uncertain world, may we never lose sight of the goodness and severity of God, the glory that awaits the redeemed, and the eternal destiny of every soul. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, stand firm in our faith, endure hardship with courage, and shine as lights in the darkness. If we remain faithful to the end, we will not only overcome the challenges of this age but also have the privilege of turning many to righteousness and sharing in the great harvest that will precede our Lord's glorious return.

[6] John 16:33
[7] 2 Timothy 2:3

About Ken Birks



Ken Birks has walked with God through seasons of quiet wonder, deep refining, and unexpected grace — journeys that have shaped both his faith and voice. From early moments of sensing God's nearness to years of learning to listen more closely, Ken has discovered that the Lord often speaks in whispers, rhythms, and poetic impressions.

Out of those sacred encounters came a desire to write — not to impress, but to invite. To invite others into the same stillness, the same clarity, the same holy encouragement that has carried them through life's valleys and mountaintops. His devotional poetry and other writings flow from a heart that has wrestled, worshiped, and been transformed by God's presence.

Today, Ken writes to help fellow believers pause, breathe, and rediscover the treasures God longs to place within them. Ken's hope is simple: that every reader will feel the Father's nearness, hear His voice more clearly, and walk with renewed courage into the calling He has lovingly prepared.

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