

ARE THERE DEGREES OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS?

Luke 12:41-48

Introduction:

- 1. The Bible clearly teaches a coming Day of Judgment!**
 - a. It will take place at the second coming of Christ (Matt. 25:31,32).**
 - b. Everyone will be judged (2 Cor. 5:10).**
 - c. It will be a personal, individual judgment (Rom. 14:12).**
 - d. We will be judged according to our works (Rev. 20:12).**
- 2. Eternity in either Heaven or Hell will follow the Judgment (Matt. 25:46).**
- 3. Will everyone who goes to Hell be punished to the same degree?**
- 4. Will everyone who goes to Heaven be rewarded to the same degree?**

Discussion:

- I. WILL ALL WHO GO TO HELL RECEIVE THE SAME PUNISHMENT?**
 - A. To be lost eternally will be terrible beyond contemplation.**
 - 1. There will be no second chance; therefore no hope!**
 - 2. One will be separated forever from God and from all that is good.**
 - 3. One will be with the evil people of all the ages.**
 - B. Man's laws suit the punishment to the crime.**
 - 1. "White collar crimes" do not carry the same severe penalties as violent crimes.**
 - 2. Petty theft is not punished as severely as armed robbery.**
 - 3. There are degrees of punishment when human life is taken.**
 - a. The penalty for involuntary manslaughter is not as serious as the penalty for murder.**
 - b. Murder is classified as being in the first, second or third degree according to premeditation and other factors.**
 - 4. The greater the guilt the greater the punishment is the rule.**
 - C. Jesus taught that some wicked cities would fare better in the Judgment than others.**

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of Judgment than for you!” (Matt. 11:21,22).

- 1. Chorazin and Bethsaida had greater opportunity; therefore they had greater guilt for rejecting God’s will.**
- 2. Tyre and Sidon were destroyed by God for their wickedness, but they would have repented had they had the opportunity that Chorazin and Bethsaida had.**
- 3. The punishment for Chorazin and Bethsaida would be greater than that of Tyre and Sidon.**
- 4. This clearly teaches degrees of punishment.**

D. The Parable of the Wicked Servant teaches that the greater the opportunity, the greater the guilt and punishment for rejecting it (Luke 12:41-48).

- 1. A master set a servant over his household and went away.**
- 2. If the master found the servant faithful to his trust when he returned, he would reward his servant greatly.**
- 3. However, if the servant took advantage of his master’s absence to beat his fellow servants and to get drunk, his master would punish him severely.**
- 4. Jesus then made application: “And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself to do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:47,48).**
- 5. Greater opportunities bring greater responsibilities and greater punishment if they are neglected.**

II. WILL ALL WHO GO TO HEAVEN RECEIVE THE SAME REWARD?

A. If the greater our sin, the greater our punishment is true, would it not also be true in regard to reward?

B. The Parable of the Vineyard is thought to teach that all who are saved will receive the same reward (Matt. 20:1-16).

- 1. Each man went to work at his first opportunity regardless of the time of day.**
- 2. Whatever time in life one hears the Gospel and obeys it, he will**

- be saved.
3. Jesus is not addressing the reward but making the point that one can be saved whenever he hears the Gospel.

C. Men have different capacities for enjoyment and appreciation.

1. Two people attend a classical music concert.
 - a. One loves the concert and is elated by it.
 - b. The other is bored silly and can't wait till it is over.
 - c. The difference is the first person is trained in music and has learned to appreciate it; the other is not so trained.
2. A baby who dies in infancy will go to Heaven.
 - a. A Christian who fought the battles of faith and finally laid down his life for the Christ will be in Heaven.
 - b. Which one will have the greater appreciation of Heaven?
3. A 90 year old dies after serving God faithfully for 75 years.
 - a. A 90 year old in a heathen land dies a few days after obeying the Gospel.
 - b. Who will have the greater appreciation and enjoyment of Heaven?
 - c. Someone like Paul will gain more from Heaven than a new convert who dies soon after obeying the Gospel.

Conclusion:

1. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people (Matt. 25:34).
 - a. If we do not enjoy Bible study, prayer, and worship, how can we enjoy Heaven?
 - b. If we do not enjoy the company of God's people and prefer it to the company of people in the world, how can we enjoy Heaven?
2. Hell is also a prepared place for a prepared people (Matt. 25:41).
 - a. Salvation is a free gift, but one earns Hell (Rom. 6:23).
 - b. No one will be in Hell except those who preferred the evil, coarse, and profane above the good, righteous and pure.
3. Are you preparing to go to Heaven, or are you preparing to go to Hell?
4. You will have a greater responsibility for having heard God's Word tonight; therefore you will have a greater punishment if you reject it.

