

Degrees of punishment in hell!

I have three texts this evening”

Matthew 11:20-24, "*Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. 'Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.'*"

James 2:10, “Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.”

Romans 3:22-23, “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Let’s say, here’s a boy whose mother dies when he is a baby, his father is a drunkard and an infidel. Here’s another boy whose mother and father are Godly people and he is raised in a good Christian training. Both of these boys die without Christ. The question I ask you, “*Is the punishment the same in hell? Does God consign to one common punishment in hell?*”

What I think or what you think doesn’t really matter, does it? What the Bible says is the important thing. Fasten your mind on one thing and never lose sight of it – **GOD IS JUST!** Over and over in Scriptures this fact is emphasized and, yet, lurking in minds of some, is a vague suspicion that God will be unjust when dealing with sinners.

GOD IS JUST! Whatever He does, one thing certain, *He will do no wrong!* Those who die without God, the most refined in nature and that cruel, debased, worthless creature, God will do no injustice!

Two facts stand out in Scripture:

1. **GOD IS JUST** and
2. **SIN MUST BE PUNISHED.**

Some say that, “*Punishment for reforming only!*” Is that true?

Here are three men. The first one is sorry at the very first; the second is “*too hard*” to reform; and the third takes about 30 days before he is ready to reform. So what is fair? Should they be punished the same? Is the only purpose of punishment just to “*reform?*”

One thing we can be sure of because the Bible is clear, sin must be punished! **IT IS RIGHT TO PUNISH SIN.** All sin, the great and small; the debased and the refined, will all be punished! Scripture teaches that the, “*Wrath of God will be revealed from heaven against ALL*

ungodliness and unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18).

3. GOD IS A GOD OF WRATH

Our character is told by what we *hate*, as well as by what we love. To love purity and not hate impurity, makes one a moral leper. To love the helpless victim and have no wrath for the murder, makes one a fiend. God hates sin and hell is for those who die in their sin!

4. FOR GOD TO BE A “JUST GOD” – PUNISHMENT MUST BE JUST

Over one dozen times in Scripture, we are told, “*God will judge according to works.*” Let me list a few:

Romans 2:6, “*God will give to each person according to what he has done.*”

1 Peter 1:17, “*Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.*”

Jeremiah 17:10, “*I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.*”

Revelation 20:12, “*And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.*”

Hebrews 2:2, “*For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment.*”

Matthew 11:20, “*Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.*”

Luke 12:47, “*That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows.*”

Mark 12:40, “*They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely.*”

God tells us that everyone who sins, no matter how small we may think that sin to be, is *guilty* of sinning as everyone else. However, God recognizes *degrees* in sin and *degrees* in punishment of sin!

In John 19:11, Jesus said, “*The one who handed me over to you is guilty of a **greater** sin.*” God says that there is no difference in the “*guilt*” of sin, but there is a tremendous difference in the “*degree*” of sin – and the degree of punishment!

God’s law can be likened to a chain – to break one link in the chain, is to break whole chain. The chain is broken, when one link is broken, but certainly to break **ALL** links in the

chain – is worse!

Paul teaches a man reaps according to his sowing in Galatians 6:7, “*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps **what he sows.***”

God’s Word teaches that the punishment in hell will be according to the light , and opportunity one receives here on earth.

Jesus said that Sodom was more wicked than Capernaum, but, because Sodom did not have the light that Capernaum had, Capernaum would be punished more severely. (Matthew 11:20-24)

I’m not sure what all that means – I can’t tell you exactly – is there some corner that is hotter? Will they receive more strips? Will the devil torment them more? – I don’t know. I only know that the person who has had light and opportunity – and dies without Christ – will receive more punishment than the person who has *not* had the chances and occasions to hear the Gospel.

God said through His prophet, Isaiah, “*I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line; hail will sweep away your refuge, (your supposed safe place) the lie (that you are safe) and water will overflow your hiding place. Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the grave (literally “hell, or “hades”) will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge (God’s destructive whip) sweeps by, you will be beaten down by it.*” (Isaiah 28:17-18).

Romans 2:12 states, “*All who sin **apart from the law** will also **perish apart from the law**, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.*”

Also, Scripture teaches that the more one sins the more punishment he will receive

Hebrews 2:2 states, “***Every** transgression will receive a just recompense of reward.*”

Satan tells you, “*Go ahead, you are going to sin, so go all the way and enjoy it!*” God says, “*No! The more you sin the more punishment you are adding to yourself.*”

Romans 2:5-6 says, “*Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are **storing up wrath** against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when His righteous judgment will be revealed. Scripture teaches that God, “will give to each person according to what he has done.”*

If you are sinning, you are adding to the stock pile of God’s wrath.

Because Scripture teaches that there will be degrees of punishment in Hell, don’t ever think that Hell won’t be so bad!

The very thought that there will be degrees of punishment in Hell should make the blood run cold in your veins. It should make you sweat and your skin turn pail because those who will suffer more will be those who are enlightened!

Every difference in environment, every privilege, will be taken into account when you stand before Jesus Christ.

My last point is: Jesus, Himself, will be the Judge

Proof that no one will be treated wrongly is the fact that Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ, Himself will be the Judge.

If any one of us received our just degree of punishment, none of us would make it into heaven. But, the Good News of the Gospel is that, though, "*we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,*" Jesus Christ took the punishment and penalty of our sin when He died on Calvary's cross and now invites us to receive Him as our "*Redeemer,*" and Savior.

Think of it, if you say no to Jesus Christ – the One you turn down, will be the One who pronounces your eternal doom. That alone should be enough to cause you to turn to Him today.