

DEGREES OF PUNISHMENT IN HELL

Matthew 11:20-24

Introduction: There are many, many beliefs and ideas about what happens after death. Some believe that there is a return to life in a different form, depending upon how one lived his/her life. Others believe that they will be reborn, live another life, die, be reborn, etc. Some believe that when a person dies, that's it! It's all over! There's nothing after death. The Bible teaches that life continues on but in one of two places. Those who have believed in God's Son, Jesus, will have an eternal home in God's Heaven and those who have not believed in God's Son, Jesus, will spend eternity in a place called "Hell." Heaven has been described as a place of indescribable beauty with everything being perfect and mansions, streets of gold, etc. Hell has been described as a horrible, painful, fiery place. A place of torment, darkness, separation and eternity with Satan and all those angels who rebelled with him. The Bible speaks of a day of judgment when every person who has ever lived will stand all alone before God to be judged for his/her earthly life and rewards and punishments will be given. The Bible speaks of "degrees" of punishment to be experienced in the place of torment, Hell. Not everybody will experience the same degree of torment.

1. Anyone planning on spending eternity in hell, the lake of fire, should live as good a life as possible while here on earth for the torment he/she will have to endure for all eternity will be according to the wickedness of his/her life while alive on this earth.
2. Jesus warned the citizens of certain cities and towns that what they had seen Him do and heard Him say and still rejected Him, that they would have a more severe sentence in hell than openly wicked cities that never heard Him or saw Him such as Sodom .
3. **Luke 12:47-48.** Jesus again refers to those who know God's will but refuses to do it face a greater punishment than those who never knew about God's will.
 - Think of those, even of our own generation, who have never heard the gospel.
 - There was a time when every human being knew about God and in Noah's day God sent the flood because the people knew about God but didn't care for Him.
4. **Romans 1:18; 2:1; Psalm 19:1-3.** From the very beginning mankind knew God but refused to accept Him.
 - Unthankful man turned to God's creation and worshipped it and their imaginations rather than God.
 - Three times in these scriptures man rejected God and God gave man up.
 - Man turned from God but God did not turn from man UNTIL man made it clear that he/she wanted no part of God.
5. Today, there is but one way to God and that is through God's Son, Jesus. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. **Acts 4:12**
 - The question is often asked, "If a person never hears about Jesus will he/she still go to hell?" YES! However that person will not suffer the same torment as one who has heard the gospel and rejected it. Like those in our own country where the gospel is so freely preached.
 - The wickedness of America is reflecting the rejection of Jesus, the gospel.

6. **2 Peter 2:21-22.** It would be better to be born in a dark jungle, live and die there and never hear the name of Jesus than to live in a place, like America, where there are churches, television broadcasts, religious programs, etc., and ignore, never give a thought to the very God that founded this great nation, and then to die in such a lost condition.
7. **Hebrews 10:26-31; Exodus 20:8-22.** If breaking the laws of Moses, given by God, brought such judgment, what can one expect if the Son of God and what He has done for mankind is rejected?
 - There is no neutral ground. Once one has heard the gospel story, he/she either accepts it or rejects it.
8. **Revelation 20:11-15.** The one ignored, rejected, never heard of, Jesus Christ, Son of God, will be the Judge of all and every human being will stand before Him in judgment.
 - **Matthew 12:36.** God's book keeping is flawless, every word, thought, intent, and deed are all carefully noted, of every human being. No one is exempt.
9. **Luke 10:20; Matthew 16:26.** Giving all this proper thought, the conclusion is that it would be better to have never been born than to live and die as an unbeliever of Jesus Christ.
 - **Revelation 21:27.** There is no place in heaven for any person who has rejected Jesus, the gospel even if he/she never had the opportunity to hear of Him.
10. **THERE IS SOMETHING WORSE THAN BEING CONDEMNED TO HELL:**
 - What could be worse than being condemned to hell? Living in America, the country of freedoms where the gospel is preached, where there are churches all around, where Christianity was the foundation of this nation, attending church services, watching religious services on television, over and over again and again, but never accepting, never believing in the Gospel message, the message of Jesus Christ, God's Son, never trusting one's self and eternity to the safe-keeping of Jesus and dying still an unbeliever.
 - Hell will be easier on those who never had the opportunities of hearing the gospel, who never got to hear the story of Jesus, than those who heard but said NO!

CONCLUSION:

1. There is a heaven, the Bible says so, and it is for those who have obeyed God, believed in Him and accepted and believed in God's Son, Jesus Christ.
2. There is a hell, the Bible says so, and it is for those who have never believed in Jesus, God's Son, whether they ever heard of Him or not.
3. There will be degrees of reward for those going to Heaven and there will be degrees of punishment for those going to Hell.
4. Just a reminder, there can be nothing worse than going to hell from right HERE!