

Will it be the same for everyone in Heaven (or Hell)?

We know that in Heaven everything will be great! Sadly, everything in Hell will be worse than terrible!! But will the conditions be exactly the same for every inhabitant? It seems most people generally accept the idea that once your location in the afterlife is known, all the conditions will be the same for everyone there. I've always thought this to be somewhat "unfair." My human reasoning seems to suggest there should be "degrees of punishment and reward." But is this just human reasoning or does the Bible actually teach some variation of conditions in both Heaven and Hell? **The following information is suggested for study.** I do reach some conclusions as we study but in no way try to force you to think the same way. All I ask is for you to examine the scriptures, in context, and seriously consider the logic presented and decide for yourself. It is a most interesting subject . I don't think you will be bored as you read!

We must start with a disclaimer: Many things about conditions in the afterlife are unknown! We cannot answer every question. However, what the Bible does teach, God wants us to know! Therefore we should study this subject as we would any other. We should always be diligent and careful as we study, remembering 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12. This is especially true for this subject because it is so seldom studied or even discussed.

Hell

We will start with the "easy" scriptures first. I know this is a very familiar passage, but I plead with you to please read it again now, noticing the underlined portions, Luke 12:35-48:

35 "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 36 like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. 37 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. 38 It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night. 39 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. 40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." 41 ¶ Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?" 42 The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? 43 It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. 44 I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 45 But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. 46 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. 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. 48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Verses 40 and 41 clearly say this is a parable and is talking about the second coming of Christ. I ask that you do not put too much emphasis on the "few blows," as if they will be trivial. These blows will not be trivial or of short duration!! They will, however, be less than what some will receive, i.e. "many blows". From this we can deduce different degrees of punishment for those in Hell. We must remember that God is infinite in wisdom and judgment and will do *exactly the right thing* for each individual. Look again at the last sentence of verse 48:

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

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If we have a special talent for some phase of serving the Lord, we must always strive to be using it to the best of our ability because more is expected from those with more talents than from those with fewer talents. This implies we must always be doing our best, whatever that is.

Our next scripture is from Hebrews 10:26-31:

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. 28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Though it is true the verse does not say the words "a man will be judged more severely who ..." but if that is not the message, then what is the message? Why did the Holy Spirit choose these words to put here if not to imply the person described will, indeed, be judged more severely? This implies degrees of punishment. The Holy Spirit does not ever put meaningless words in God's Holy Book. We can rest assured there is no "filler" in the Bible.

If you know of other scriptures on the subject of degrees of punishment or equality of punishment for all, please send them to me for inclusion in my next update on this paper. Please read the list of scriptures at the end of this paper suggested by my friend Peter Morphy from Royal Oak, MI.

Heaven

If there are degrees of punishment in Hell, it seems likely there would also be degrees of reward in Heaven. But do the scriptures actually teach this difference of existence in Heaven? Let us consider a passage from Paul.

1 Corinthians 15:35-49:

35 ¶ But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" 36 How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

Paul says through the Holy Spirit the kind or type of resurrected body we will have is foolishness to discuss in detail, but generally he can tell us some of the differences. It will be different from the present earthly body. Our body, like any seed, must die before the new body comes to life again.

37 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

Using a plant seed as an example, and even mentioning "wheat or something else" implies a difference in the type/kind of body we will receive, as the various plant seeds produce various "bodies." It seems God is giving each a body as He determined, which implies different bodies, which concurs with our being able to recognize different resurrected bodies, as the Rich Man did Lazarus and the apostles did Jesus after His resurrection.

39 All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.

Why mention four kinds of flesh? Maybe to imply differences in the bodies of the next life.

40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. 41 The sun

These three verses seem to be the central point of this context. The contrast between "the splendor (glory, in most translations) of the heavenly bodies ... and the splendor of the earthly bodies" and comparing the splendor of the sun and the splendor of the moon, and "star differs from star in splendor" all seem

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has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. 42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead.

The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

to point to the fact that the bodies after the resurrection will differ in glory. This conclusion seems to be solidified by v. 42 "So will it be with the resurrection of the dead." The new bodies will be recognizable, therefore different. But is that all? No, they will also differ in splendor/glory, exemplifying degrees of reward!

This whole paragraph verifies, repeats for emphasis, giving several examples to demonstrate the reality of the resurrected (spiritual) body, it will be recognizable and glorious and greatly different from earthly body.

This paragraph comparing Adam to Christ just continues the affirmation that we, too shall have a resurrected, recognizable, glorious, spiritual body that will last throughout the eternity of the afterlife. The following two verses add testimony to our conclusions.

1 John 3:2

2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Phil. 3:21

21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Every human society has rules or guidelines for living peacefully. There is always punishment for breaking these rules. No society gives the same punishment for every violation. Even the law of God for the Jews followed this pattern. The New Testament also gives us examples of varying consequences, i.e. correction for wrong, disfellowship for continuing error or onetime "big" sins, i.e. adultery, murder, and punishment in Hell for unrepented sins (as well as failing to obey God's commands). There is also all kinds and types of discipline for sins, the severity determined by God, Hebrews 12:4-11. All this proves beyond a reasonable doubt the total of all human experience produces varied consequences for various actions and this is also manifested as God deals with man.

Because of this it is very normal to deduce that this practice of varied consequences resulting from different actions would be continued in Heaven and Hell. If this is a reasonable implication, but is not true, then God should give us some information to correct that reasonable implication.

For example; for all of human existence, in every area of the globe and over all human history the physical intimacy between the sexes is normal, prominent and even necessary for existence. It was therefore most normal for men to assume the continuation of that relationship into the next life, as the Sadducees did, Matthew 22:23 ff. But Jesus corrected this mistake, saying there will be no marriage, and therefore no physical intimacy in the next life.

Another example is death. All humans die. They always have, they are now and they always will, until Christ comes. Thinking this condition will continue forever was most natural, until Christ taught the resurrection and no more death after He returns.

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The existence of time is so much a part of our lives it is impossible to conceive of life without it. It is natural therefore to think of time existing in the afterlife, that is until God teaches us through His Word that Time will end, Revelation 10:6. See "Time will end" on my website, cliffbaird.wordpress.com

I am sure you can think of many more examples to illustrate that those things most common in our existence are assumed to carry forward into the next life, unless the God's Word tells us differently.

Would it be natural for us to assume varying consequences for different actions to apply in the afterlife? (I am interested in your response to this question, please share with me on the website or email.)

The point is this: If it is "normal" for us to think this, and our God knows we think this would he not correct our mistake on this point? From the examples above God has, indeed, corrected our misunderstanding about several things in the afterlife, why would He not correct this mistake also? Or maybe you think He did. Please share with me any evidence that God has corrected the concept of degrees of punishment and degrees of reward in the afterlife and I will make the appropriate changes in this paper and notify all of you that the change has been made. Thanks in advance for your help. Until that evidence is presented we must conclude that there will indeed be degrees of punishment and reward in the next life.

I hope this conclusion does not raise more questions than it answers. Remember I started this paper with: "We must start with a disclaimer: Many things about conditions in the afterlife are unknown! We cannot answer every question." This is true, but we cannot ignore a Bible subject for this reason. We must be willing to accept whatever the Bible teaches us, even when **all** our questions are not answered.

My great thanks for the following list of scriptures to my friend Peter Morphy from Royal Oak, MI. He highlighted the pertinent part of each verse. It seems most of these verses support our conclusion and none of them oppose it.

Scripture list from Peter Morphy

Degrees of Reward In Heaven

Psalms 18:20 “The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; **according to the cleanness of my hands He has rewarded me.**”

Proverbs 24:12 “If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who guards your life know it? **Will He not repay each person according to what he has done?**”

Isaiah 40:10 “See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and His arm rules for him. See, **His reward is with Him, and His recompense accompanies Him.**”

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.**”

Matthew 5:12 “Rejoice and be glad, because **great is your reward in heaven**, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Matthew 5:19 “Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called **least in the kingdom of heaven**, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be **called great in the kingdom of heaven.**”

Matthew 6:17-18 “But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and **your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.**”

Matthew 6:19-20 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. **But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”

Matthew 10:41-42 “Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet **will receive a prophet's reward**, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man **will receive a righteous man's reward**. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, **he will certainly not lose his reward.**”

Matthew 16:27 “For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then **He will reward each person according to what he has done.**”

Matthew 18:4 “Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is **the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.**”

Matthew 19:28ff “Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, **you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**”

Matthew 23:4 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, **you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.**”

Matthew 25:14-30 v.21 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; **I will put you in charge of many things.** Come and share your master's happiness!’”

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Luke 6:22-23 “Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. ‘Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because **great is your reward in heaven.** For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.’”

Luke 6:34-35 “And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. **Then your reward will be great,** and you will be sons of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.”

Luke 12:33 “Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, **a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted,** where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.”

Luke 19:15-19 v. 16-17 “The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’ ‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. **‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’**”

Matthew 20:20-23 “Jesus said to them, **‘You will indeed drink from My cup, but to sit at My right or left is not for Me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by My Father.’**”

1 Corinthians 3:8 “The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and **each will be rewarded according to his own labor.**”

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 “If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. **If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.** If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.”

2 Corinthians 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that **each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.**”

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 “For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, **you are our glory and joy.**”

1 Timothy 6:18-19 “Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way **they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age,** so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”

James 3:1 “Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach **will be judged more strictly.**”

Revelation 2:23 “I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that **I am He who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.**”

Revelation 20:12-13 “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.** The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and **each person was judged according to what he had done.**”

Scripture list from Peter Morphy

Revelation 22:12 “Behold, I am coming soon! **My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.**”

Degrees of Punishment In Hell

Matthew 11:22 “But I tell you, it will be **more bearable** for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.”

Matthew 11:24 “But I tell you that it will be **more bearable** for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.”

Matthew 23:15 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him **twice as much a son of hell as you are.**”

Luke 12:42-48 v. 47-48 “**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. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows.** From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. ”

Romans 2:5-7 “But 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 **God ‘will give to each person according to what he has done.’**”

Hebrews 10:28-29 “Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. **How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot**, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified Him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?”

2 Peter 2:20-21 “If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, **they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.** It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.”

Giving an Account of Our Life to God

Matthew 12:36-37 “But I tell you that men will have to **give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.** For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Romans 14:12 “So then, **each of us will give an account of himself to God.**”

Hebrews 4:13 “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. **Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**”

Hebrews 13:17 “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you **as men who must give an account.** Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

1 Peter 4:5 “**But they will have to give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.**”