

# Three Degrees of Glory Cheat Sheet

## CORE POSITION (ONE SENTENCE)

The Bible teaches differentiated resurrection glory (1 Corinthians 15:40-42), multiple heavens (2 Corinthians 12:2), many dwelling places (John 14:2), and

proportional judgment (Matthew 11:22) — the heaven/hell binary is a medieval simplification, not the biblical picture.

## KEY FACTS

- Paul explicitly names three levels of glory — sun, moon, stars — and ties them to the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:40-42)
- Paul references a "third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2), necessarily implying a first and second
- Jesus taught "many mansions" in the Father's house (John 14:2) — plural, differentiated

- The Bible teaches proportional judgment: "more tolerable" (Matt. 11:22), "many stripes" vs. "few stripes" (Luke 12:47-48)
- Irenaeus (c. 180 AD) explicitly taught a three-tiered afterlife connected to "many mansions"
- The heaven/hell binary cannot account for degrees of reward or the concept of a "better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35)

## THEIR PROOF-TEXTS — AND RESPONSES

Verse	Their Claim	Our Response
<b>Matt. 25:46</b>	Binary: eternal life or eternal punishment	One parable, one point. Other parables (talents, laborers) teach proportional reward. Other verses teach degrees of judgment (Matt. 11:22; Luke 12:47-48).
<b>1 Cor. 15:40</b>	"Celestial/terrestrial" = body types, not kingdoms	Paul says "so also is the resurrection" (v. 42) — different bodies = different resurrection outcomes = different glory levels. LDS doctrine unites body type with kingdom.
<b>Rev. 20:15</b>	Lake of fire = everyone not saved goes to hell	Revelation is apocalyptic literature full of symbolic judgment imagery. Even within Revelation, the final state involves differentiated reward (Rev. 22:12 — "according as his work shall be").

## OUR BEST SCRIPTURES

- **1 Corinthians 15:40-42** — Sun, moon, stars = three glories; "so also is the resurrection"
- **2 Corinthians 12:2** — Paul caught up to the "third heaven"
- **John 14:2** — "Many mansions" / many dwelling places
- **Matthew 11:22, 24** — "More tolerable" for some at judgment

- **Luke 12:47-48** — Many stripes vs. few stripes — proportional judgment
- **Matthew 16:27** — Reward "according to his works"
- **1 Corinthians 3:12-15** — Believers saved with differing outcomes; "saved, yet so as by fire"
- **Hebrews 11:35** — "A better resurrection" — implies degrees
- **Daniel 12:3** — Different degrees of luminous glory in resurrection
- **Revelation 20:12-13** — Judged according to works
- **D&C 76:96-98** — Celestial, terrestrial, telestial = sun, moon, stars

## EARLY CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE

Source	Position	Significance
<b>Irenaeus (c. 180)</b>	Three-tiered afterlife: heaven, paradise, city; connected to "many mansions" ( <i>AH</i> , 5.36.1-2)	Earliest major theologian taught graduated salvation
<b>Clement of Alexandria (c. 200)</b>	"Different abodes proportionate to the worth of those who have believed" ( <i>Stromata</i> , 6.14)	Multiple levels of reward for the saved
<b>Origen (c. 230)</b>	Sun/moon/stars = degrees of resurrection glory ( <i>De Princ.</i> , 2.10.2)	Explicitly read 1 Cor. 15 the way LDS do
<b>Jewish tradition</b>	Multiple heavens (Testament of Levi, 2 Enoch, Talmud)	Paul's "third heaven" draws on established tradition

## QUICK-FIRE OBJECTION RESPONSES

### "The Bible teaches heaven and hell — two destinations, period."

The Bible teaches degrees of judgment (Matt. 11:22), proportional reward (Matt. 16:27), many mansions (John 14:2), a third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2), a better resurrection (Heb. 11:35), and three glories compared to sun, moon, and stars (1 Cor. 15:40-42). The binary is an oversimplification of the scriptural data.

### "1 Corinthians 15 is about bodies, not kingdoms."

The type of glorified body corresponds to the type of resurrection outcome — Paul says "so also is the resurrection of the dead." Different glories in the body = different states in the afterlife.

### "This eliminates the urgency of the gospel."

The celestial kingdom requires receiving the gospel, entering covenants, and enduring faithfully. The gap between celestial glory and lesser degrees is immense. The urgency is not "avoid hell" but "receive the fullness" — which is arguably more motivating.

### "D&C 76 is just Joseph Smith's invention."

The biblical evidence is substantial on its own: three glories, third heaven, many mansions, proportional judgment, a better resurrection. D&C 76 systematizes what the Bible already teaches.

### "'Third heaven' just means the highest heaven."

Then there are at least three heavens. What are the first and second? The LDS answer is the most natural reading.

## STRONGEST ARGUMENT IN ONE PARAGRAPH

Paul teaches that the resurrection involves different degrees of glory — "one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars" — and explicitly says "so also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:41-42). He references a "third heaven" (2 Corinthians 12:2), implying a first and second. Jesus taught that "in my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2). The Bible

repeatedly teaches proportional judgment: "more tolerable" for some cities than others (Matthew 11:22), "many stripes" versus "few" (Luke 12:47-48), reward "according to his works" (Matthew 16:27), and a "better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:35). Irenaeus (c. 180 AD) explicitly taught a three-tiered afterlife connected to "many mansions." The heaven/hell binary is a medieval simplification — the biblical and early Christian picture is differentiated, graduated, and proportional, exactly as the Latter-day Saint doctrine of three degrees of glory teaches.

**Resources:**

- [FairLatterdaySaints — Three Degrees of Glory](#)

- [ChurchofJesusChrist.org — Kingdoms of Glory](#)