Session 37 - Degrees of Glory

Question: *Will there be degrees of reward in heaven and degrees of punishment in hell? On what besis will this judgment be made? Who will be the judge?*

1. *Will there be degrees of reward in heaven and degrees of punishment in hell?* 
   1. Yes there will be “degrees of glory” in heaven
      1. Francis Pieper: “There are no degrees of bliss, because all the blessed are perfectly happy, that is, every one of them will find full contentment for himself in beholding God. however, Scripture does teach that there are degrees of glory corresponding to differences of work and fidelity here on earth. This teaching is proved by Scripture texts such as 2 Cor. 9:6 f. And Dan. 12:3.”
   2. Yes, there will be degrees of punishment in hell.
      1. Francis Pieper: “Degrees of torment, determined by the nature of the sins to be punished, are plainly taught in the Bible. Matt. 11:22: “It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment than for you.” The severest punishment follows on the rejection of the Gospel by those to whom it had been preached in rich measure, as Christ testifies in regard to Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (Matt. 11:16-24).”
2. *On what basis will this judgment be made?* 
   1. Degrees of glory will be based on one's faithfulness on earth.
      1. Parable of the Talents
   2. Degrees of punishment will be based on at least two criteria
      1. Leading others astray, especially when in a position of religious authority.
      2. Betrayal of Christ (his church)
         1. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” (Matt 26:24.
         2. Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.” (John 19:11).
      3. Falling away from the faith, after having had it.
         1. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. (2 Peter 2:21).
3. *Who will be the judge?*
   1. The most comprehensive answer is that God is the Judge, and he will judge through the son, and the son will judge through the apostles and saints. What they judge, (for instance sheep and goats; degrees of glory or degrees of punishment, false doctrine) may have various answers. And Christians are to judge and discern people on earth, for instance false prophets of whom Jesus says “you will know them by their fruit”.
   2. The Father
      1. Jesus said of the Father in John 8:50: “Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. “
   3. Jesus
      1. For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,
   4. The 12 Apostles
      1. Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matt 19:28
   5. Saints (judge the angels) (1 Cor 6:3)
      1. Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!