

## e-concepts

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### The Bible and Inequality

By Jerry Collins

The progressive social justice movement considers inequality unjust, but the Bible does not. **The Bible documents inequality as a virtuous concept.** God showed His favoritism toward Israel when in her infancy God *passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you while you were in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you while you were in your blood, 'Live!'* (Ezekiel 16:6).



When Israel left Egypt, the Lord informed Israel that they were His chosen people as *a special possession above all the peoples who are on the face of the ground* (Deuteronomy 7:6). Indeed, *the whole earth and everything in it is the Lord's* (Deuteronomy 10:14), but Israel is His special possession. In choosing the nation of Israel over other nations, God had made a distinction. **God was discriminating between nations, not treating them as equals.**

Social inequities are a natural outcome of life lived here in this world. Jesus declared, *"do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things"* (Matthew 6:31-32). Paul testified *not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am* (Philippians 4:11). The writer of Hebrews encouraged *being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5). Believers should be content with their economic and/or social status rather than campaigning to resolve social or economic inequality either for themselves or the disadvantaged.

**The parable of the talents warns of the need to prepare for the coming Kingdom where some will have more dominion, authority, power, and wealth than others.** Servants were given personal property by the master to invest *each according to his own ability* (Matthew 25:15). Eventually, their investment was accounted for when the master returned. Two had invested well and were *put in charge of many things* (v. 25). Another invested nothing and was called *a wicked, lazy servant* (v. 26). A progressive social justice warrior might have expected a redistribution of wealth when the master returned. Instead, the unprofitable servant's talent was taken from him and given to the one who had ten talents (v. 28).

Jesus' concluding statement about reward and service in His Kingdom seems unjust. *For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance. But to the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him* (v. 29). **According to Jesus there will be inequality in God's Kingdom.** The point is not who has been given much but what they did with what they were given. Equal opportunity and equal access here on earth does not guarantee an equal eternal outcome. That depends upon how each of the servants invest their lives according to eternal realities.

**It is also likely that there will be inequality in heaven.** Praise and honor at the Judgment Seat of Christ reveals the eternal significance of rewards, *each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward* (1 Corinthians 3:15-16; cp. 2 Corinthians 5:9-10). The specific terminology employed in Matthew 6:19-21, *treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys*; in 1 Corinthians 9:25, *imperishable, incorruptible, immortal*; and in 1 Peter 5:4, *unfading*, to describe future rewards and promised crowns, is testimony to their eternal nature. **There will be eternal distinctions.**