

# Luke 12:47

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

## Analysis

**And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes** (έκεΐνος δὲ ὁ δοῦλος ὁ γνοὺς τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ καὶ μὴ ἔτοιμάσας ἢ ποιήσας πρὸς τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ δαρήσεται πολλάς, εκεinos de ho doulos ho gnous to thelēma tou kyriou autou kai mē hetoimasas ē poiēsas pros to thelēma autou darēsetai pollas)— This verse establishes the principle of proportional judgment based on knowledge. The aorist participle gnous (γνούς, having known) indicates definite knowledge of the master's will (to thelēma, τὸ θέλημα). Yet despite knowing, the servant neither prepared (hetoimasas, ἔτοιμάσας) nor acted (poiēsas, ποιήσας) according to that will.

The passive verb darēsetai (δαρήσεται, will be beaten) with the cognate accusative pollas (πολλάς, many stripes) indicates severe punishment—literally "will be beaten with many." The severity corresponds to the knowledge possessed. Greater knowledge of God's will creates greater responsibility; disobedience despite knowledge brings greater judgment. This principle appears throughout Scripture: "to whom much is given, of him shall much be required" (verse 48). The servant who knows but doesn't obey faces stricter judgment than one who acts in ignorance. Knowledge without obedience compounds guilt rather than excusing it.

## Historical Context

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Roman and Jewish law practiced corporal punishment, with the number of stripes proportional to the offense's severity. Jewish law limited flogging to forty lashes (Deuteronomy 25:3), later reduced to thirty-nine to avoid accidental excess (2 Corinthians 11:24). This cultural context makes the "many stripes" comprehensible—severe but measured punishment. Jesus' teaching established a principle the New Testament develops: greater privilege brings greater accountability. James warns that teachers receive stricter judgment (James 3:1). Those who sin against greater light face greater condemnation (Hebrews 10:26-31).

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does knowing God's will but not obeying it increase rather than decrease guilt and judgment?
2. What does proportional punishment based on knowledge teach about divine justice and human accountability?
3. In what areas of life might you possess clear knowledge of God's will yet fail to prepare yourself or act accordingly?

## Interlinear Text

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ἐκεῖνος δὲ τὸ δοῦλος τὸ γνοὺς τὸ θέλημα τὸ  
that And which servant which knew which to his will which  
G1565 G1161 G3588 G1401 G3588 G1097 G3588 G2307 G3588  
  
κυρίου ἔαυτοῦ, καὶ μὴ ἐτοιμάσας μηδὲ ποιήσας  
lord's his and not prepared himself neither did  
G2962 G1438 G2532 G3361 G2090 G3366 G4160  
  
πρὸς τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ δαρήσεται πολλάς·  
according which to his will G846 shall be beaten with many  
G4314 G3588 G2307 G1194 G4183

## Additional Cross-References

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**James 4:17** (Parallel theme): Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

**John 9:41** (Parallel theme): Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

**John 12:48** (Parallel theme): He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

**Acts 17:30** (Parallel theme): And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: