

Chapter 8: Count the Cost

Dig Deeper:

Passage: Read Deuteronomy 6:10-12

"Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied then watch yourself, that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

Deuteronomy 11:8 (parallel passage)

"You shall therefore keep every commandment which I am commanding you today, so that you may be strong and go in and possess the land into which you are about to cross to possess it..."

Did Moses put a condition with going in and possessing the land? If so, what? _____

Today's theme, *rewards for obedience!* In our key passage, the Israelites were promised a land (Tabernacles)—as an inheritance or reward for their obedience (Pentecost). Today, we're going to explore just how exciting rewards can be, and why we can confidently teach our children that delayed gratification—not living for the counterfeit, temporary pleasures of this life—can really pay off in the end!

The concept of special rewards for obedience is taught throughout the Bible, beginning with the "Mosaic Covenant" back in Exodus 19:1-8 and 24:1-8. Read Exodus 19:4-8 (condensed):

God speaking: "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'"

All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!"

Remember how we discussed in an earlier lesson that the things played out in the natural world would all be applied and fulfilled in the spiritual sense through Christ? In this case, the Mosaic Covenant today calls out to a "spiritual nation" of "chosen" people who will be obedient to God to be used as His special servants in the plans He has for the coming two ages. We will explore these plans and ages in today's lesson and next week's.

Read 1 Peter 1:1-2. *To those who reside as aliens...who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.*

What are 2 characteristics of the audience of the book of 1 Peter? Those who are _____ and _____.

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Now read 1 Peter 2:9-10 (same audience): But you are A CHOSEN [OFFSPRING], A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

In case you missed it, Peter is writing to the chosen, whom he identifies as being sanctified through obedience. NASB puts quotes from the OT into all caps, so you can see that Peter was quoting from the Mosaic Covenant, reassuring the “spiritual offspring” of the “spiritual seed” of Jacob (Messiah) that they would be a chosen people and a royal priesthood. Revelation also mentions the “kingdom of priests” three times, who will one day “reign” with Christ. We will consider the implications of that in a moment.

1 Peter and Revelation are not speaking about physical Israelites or Jews, as some Bible teachers would have you believe. Neither are they defining the “chosen” as those who have been saved. But they are speaking of all of those who are now considered “spiritual Israel,” who will be fit to reign with Him. Awhile back we saw how Paul clearly defines a “true Jew” and a “true Israelite” as all those believers, both Jew and Gentile (of which there are neither in Christ), who are living under the *New Covenant* and are circumcised of heart (set apart from the world) and obedient to Christ. Some people would say that all the rest who are not obedient or sacrificial are not “true Christians,” but I believe that the NT is teaching a completely different concept that can only be understood with a Hebrew perspective on the Covenants. Those “Christians” who do not live a set apart life, a sacrificial life, an obedient life, are no different than the Israelites who were content with their Passover experience and did not learn mature faith and obedience on the way to the Promised Land. They tried to skip their “Pentecost experience” and so they were not the first to enter the Promised Land. In fact, out of *millions*, ONLY TWO were ready and able—Joshua and Caleb. Of course, they were all God’s people, and they will one day enter the “Promised Land” after their resurrection, but they were delayed in the natural world so that they could become a teacher to us today of the spiritual application of rewards for obedience.

This is a little known fact by many believers today, but by choosing the path of Pentecost (belief and obedience) like Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:1-25), *we are expediting our move into our permanent tabernacles*. What is “permanent Tabernacles? It is being resurrected into immortality and the complete and final fullness of Christ dwelling in and through us. It is “living behind the last veil (reference to last week’s teaching).”

Here’s where I’m going to share something that has radically and totally changed the way I look at the surrendered Christian life (and the way I raise my kids)! There are actually *two resurrections of believers* spoken about in Scriptures, and the first resurrection is one of special rewards. I believe this is why so many believers get confused about Paul’s (and Jesus’) writings of missing out on rewards and falling short of “the prize.” The prize and reward for faith and obedience for believers is being resurrected in the first resurrection to “reign with Christ” for 1,000 years in the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-6). The Millennial Kingdom is also referred to as the Sabbath Millennium and the Wedding Feast in Scriptures. It is a thousand year special reign with Christ for overcomers. The rest of the dead do not come to life until after this special

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age (we'll see Scripture below). This is the meaning behind the parable of "The Ten Virgins" in Matthew 25:1-12. All were "believers," but only five were "ready" for the reward of going into the Wedding Feast with their Bridegroom.

Who will these overcomers be ruling and reigning over? In the Millennial Kingdom there will be mortals who have survived the Tribulation. They will need to be taught the ways of God and kept under the authority of Christ. You can read all about this Kingdom in Isaiah and Zechariah. I believe the Bible teaches (even if we don't know what we're reading or where to look) that the overcomers will also rule and reign with Christ during the following Judgment Age (White Throne Judgment). Hebrews 6:2 in any literal Bible translation reads "the age enduring Judgment," which is a better translation than "the eternal judgment," because the Judgment is an event, not a condition. This Judgment, with the aid of "God's special helpers," is what Paul spoke of in 1 Cor. 6:2-3, when he mentions the saints, "judging the world and angels." I encourage you to study these topics out further on your own, or ask me to direct you to further studies. This is just an overview.

For now, let's look into the biblical support for two resurrections, which I believe is "pictured" and taught throughout Scripture.

Again, Joshua and Caleb are probably the first picture, being the only two of all of Israel to enter the PL at the first go around. After that, we are introduced to the concept of "first fruits" (firstfruits in some versions), "unleavened bread," and "barley offerings" in Leviticus. After careful study, the "unleavened bread" represents both Jesus initially, and then His overcomers as those who live righteously (without the leaven of sin). Of course, Jesus is the only one who is sinless, but the overcomers have a next level of righteousness in Christ for living a set apart lifestyle (from the world).

The firstfruits, or barley, are a reference to the first harvest of the crop season, followed by wheat, followed by grapes (the 3 levels of harvest throughout the OT are not ultimately implying earthly crops, but spiritual crops). In the Bible (and in the natural world), the barley only needs "winnowing" to be de-chaffed (a light blowing). Jesus is referred to as a firstfruit, and then Paul and James both refer to obedient believers (I call them overcomers) also as firstfruits (see Rom. 8:23, James 1:18 in NAS). Wheat, the second harvest needs "threshing" to remove the chaff and make it useful, and grapes (largely hypocrites) are trod underfoot in the winepress.

These are the three levels of harvest corresponding to the harvest of mankind, and are a foundational Hebrew teaching that also culminates in the Feast of Tabernacles, which is also called "The Feast of Ingathering." In the OT, the Israelites celebrated Ingathering on the Feast of Tabernacles to celebrate the bringing in of all the three levels of harvest. I believe this is a picture for us of the future.

Subtle implications of a resurrection of rewards:

*"Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win **the prize** unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything" (2 Tim. 2:5-7).*

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“And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32—notice, sanctified, not justified).

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance” (Col. 3:23-24) Note: We do not “work” for salvation and everlasting life, it is a free gift for faith.

*“Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering **His rest**, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. ... Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience” (Heb. 4:1, 11).*

One of my favorites comes from a gem I discovered in the Greek text. If you read Philippians 3:9-14 in context, you will see an even better picture, but for space, I’m only going to quote a couple verses from the text to show a cool hint at a first resurrection in the Greek:

*...in order that I may attain to the **resurrection from the dead**. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

At first glance, one might assume that Paul is speaking of the general resurrection of believers that we’re all expecting. But the first thing I notice is that Paul is worried about “not attaining” to this resurrection, and that he must “work” for it. Well, I know there is NO WAY that Paul is speaking of losing his salvation—he knows that it is not by works he is saved (his own words, Ephesians 2:8-9, Gal. 2:21).

So I did a little peek into the Greek. And I found one little word added that the translators skip over and don’t translate. It’s a word never used once in the New Testament when referring to the general resurrection of believers. The word for “resurrection” is “anastasin,” but the word used here is “(ec)anastasin.” I won’t go into all the details, but the “ec” means “out” and Paul is referring to a special resurrection different than the general resurrection, and he calls it the “out resurrection.” Ecanastasin is only used three more times in the whole NT—twice when referring to Jesus’ resurrection from the dead (Acts 26:23, Rom. 1:2-4), which was *before* the general resurrection, and one other time in Hebrews 11:35 when “women received (past tense) back their dead” by a special resurrection, also not a part of the general resurrection. Every other time resurrection is mentioned in the NT, it is simply, “anastasin.” So I believe Paul is teaching us about a special resurrection for REWARDS that must be earned and strived for.

Again, we do not “fall short” of salvation or it would be a result of our own works and not by faith, which would be contrary to Scriptures. Paul is addressing Jewish believers in this last passage who understood since the days of Moses that he is speaking of the Millennial Kingdom reward, referred to as the “Sabbath (Rest) Millennium” and patterned after the 7th day of creation when God rested from all His work. The Sabbath Millennium is said to endure for a thousand years (Rev. 20:2-7), in keeping with the first six millennia, which have been (I believe) patterned

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after the first six days of creation through toil and work. You can learn more about the 7 days of creation and how they are symbolically patterned after the 7 millennia by studying online, but one great picture of the corresponding millennia to the seven days can be found at: <http://www.messianic.ws/millennial.htm>.

Consider Paul's words in regard to the Feasts and the Sabbath:

How do we know all of this is symbolic of future events? Paul says, *“Therefore no one is to act as your judge in...respect to a festival (Feast) or a new moon or a Sabbath day-- things which are a mere shadow of what is to come...” (Col 2:16-17)*. Paul is saying that all those “random” things going on in the Old Testament were actually prophetic teachers about future events!

Quoting from Steve Jones, tying together the Feasts and the Tabernacle:

The unveiling of Jesus Christ, then, comes in three basic stages. These stages are depicted by the three main feast days of Israel—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles—as well as the structure of the Sanctuary. On a personal level, we enter into the Most Holy Place through the progressive steps of Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification.

In the historic application, the first ones to go through these three steps into the final Glorification of the body (the barley harvest) are the overcomers. Then at the general (second) resurrection, which is the wheat harvest, the rest of the believers will come into that full maturity and Glorification. ...The point is that Christ even now indwells us, but He is veiled. One can only see Christ by spiritual discernment. But there is a day coming when Christ will be unveiled in the sons of God.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK! We'll look at more supporting scriptures for the two resurrections for believers.

Group Interaction:

- What “Isaac” has God asked you to put on the altar? Remember, an Isaac is not giving up something undesirable for God (like a bad habit), but an Isaac is that which you treasure deeply. If so, how did you respond? What was the outcome in your life to this point?
- In the book I quote Andrew Murray: “Consecrated training requires complete devotion in daily life” (pg. 111). What does he mean by “complete devotion”? What would it look like for your family? Generate ideas with the group, remembering that no two families are alike. The methods that work in one might not be a good fit for another.
- One of our goals as arrow parents is to prepare to release our children to follow their God-given calling. What obstacles do you face to fully release your children? What adjustments will be necessary?
- Have you made it a habit to communicate to your children as they are developing that they should feel the freedom to pursue the mission in any way they feel called? Do you feel comfortable with this? Why or why not?
- In what ways are you encouraging or helping your children to pursue *the mission* in their daily life? How could you be more proactive or deliberate about it?
- Do you feel that your material possessions or pursuit of them have (at any time) interfered with *the mission* for you family? In what ways?

Bring it Home:

Jesus taught His disciple to SURRENDER...

Day 1: Read Matthew 4:18-20

Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

Day 2: Read Matthew 6:24

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other."

Day 3: Read Matthew 10:37-38

"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

Day 4: Read Matthew 13:44-46

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Day 5: Read Matthew 16:24-27

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his soul will lose it; but whoever loses his soul for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits (Greek "zemioo": damages or suffers loss to) his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS."

Day 6: Read Matthew 19:29

"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life."

Day 7: Read Luke 14:27-30, 33

"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up [all he has]."