

## **Chapter 9: Keep Your Eyes on the Prize**

### **Dig Deeper:**

Passage: Read Deuteronomy 6:13-19

*“You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.*

*“You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah. You should diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you. You shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore to give your fathers, by driving out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.”*

Phew! What an important emphasis God continuously puts upon obedience for all His children! Some people would just say, “Oh, that was only for the Old Covenant people, today we’re under grace so the law is done away with!” Nothing could be further from the truth! Review chapter 2 study to be reminded of the many NT verses that shred that kind of belief. The difference is, we are not saved by works and keeping the Law, but we learn to become true sons of the Most High when we learn to live by His “law of love.” Remember Jesus said that this Law sums up all the OT Torah and prophets! And if obedience is not required, what is the point of God’s discipline?

*FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES. It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Heb. 12:6-11*

Going forward from last week—evidence for TWO resurrections for believers, with one for rewards of the faithful overcomers!

### **Two Resurrections for Believers**

I have discovered convincingly that Bible study today (after umpteen translations of translations of early Scriptures, and the fact that God says numerous times that He desires those who seek for Him earnestly—like buried treasure) is more like *treasure hunting*. If our assumptions are wrong based on incorrect or incomplete teachings we’ve had, we are not likely to see certain verses for what they are. Consider these two passages:

*“For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness...from weakness*

## One Million Arrows Study for Parents

By Julie Ferwerda

*were made strong...and others were tortured, not accepting their release, **so that they might obtain a better resurrection...*** (Hebrews 11:32-35, selected)

*“And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. **This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection;** over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. Revelation 20:4-6*

It is important to piece this together. In Revelation here we see that the “blessed and holy” come alive in the first resurrection to reign for 1,000 years, with no mention of judgment. Could this be talking about all believers? Notice it says “the rest of the dead do not come to life until the thousand years are over.” If you continue reading, John reports that “after the thousand years are over” the Great White Throne Judgment takes place. Putting the pieces together in Scripture:

1. The first resurrection does NOT involve judgment, but only reigning with Christ for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:6).
2. After the thousand years are complete, the rest of the dead come to life (Rev. 20:5, 12)
3. The rest of the dead are all judged at the same time. At this Judgment it says IF anyone’s name (of those resurrected in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase) is not written in the book of life, he is thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).
4. When Jesus speaks of the general resurrection, there are both believers and unbelievers resurrected at the same time and they are judged together, which is consistent with the general resurrection (Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:28-29)

In Hebrew teaching (Torah), the “8<sup>th</sup> Day” was a Day of Judgment, circumcision, and new beginnings. Remember that in Hebrew teaching, a “day” can also correspond to longer periods of time. Many Jews believe that the 7 days of creation represent 7 millennia, and that the 8<sup>th</sup> day represents another millennia or age called, “The Last Great Day” or “The 8<sup>th</sup> Day” (you can find plenty about this online, especially on Jewish websites), and corresponds to the White Throne Judgment and the New Heaven and New Earth. The New Testament *Greek* Scriptures agree that the White Throne Judgment lasts for an age, not a day (see Young’s Literal Translation (or any literal) of Mark 3:29 and Heb. 6:1-2—most modern translations incorrectly translate it as “eternal judgment” which cannot be true since a judgment is an event, not a condition). I believe in this Judgment Age that the Bible clearly teaches that those in the first resurrection who are actually resurrected 1,000 years earlier (overcomers/ obedient/ surrendered), will assist Jesus with this Judgment (also 1 Cor. 6:2-3). To what degree? I don’t know. But consider Revelation 2:26-27:

*“He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, **TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES,** as I also have received {authority} from My Father...”*

## One Million Arrows Study for Parents

By Julie Ferwerda

Also consider Psalm 149:5-9: *Let the godly ones exult in glory; Let them sing for joy on their beds. {Let} the high praises of God {be} in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute on them the judgment written; This is an honor for all His godly ones. Praise the LORD!*

I have made my case that there are two commitment levels of Christians with different outcomes in the coming two ages. To me it would only make sense that sacrificial, hard-working, obedient believers should be given an offer of special rewards in light of the half-hearted approach by “marginal” or lukewarm believers who are not living for the Kingdom while in this age. God is a God of justice.

One note in closing, while the three Feasts we’ve discussed have personal application (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles), they also have prophetic symbolism for all believers corporately, more fully explained in the Torah (Exodus 23:14-17, Deut. 16:1-16). In the future Millennial Kingdom, (I believe) there is fulfillment of Tabernacles in at least two layers. Those in the first resurrection will be “tabernacling” with God in their immortal bodies (a whole study in itself) in perfect spiritual communion. And those mortals who survive the Tribulation will be “tabernacling” with Jesus externally in the flesh while He reigns on earth. The Feast of Tabernacles as a holy day will still be instituted on earth and all nations of mortals will be required to attend, according to Zech. 14:16-19. The Millennial Kingdom, however, is not the final layer of fulfillment. That will come at a later event after the Judgment Age when God the Father makes His dwelling or tabernacle on earth on a grander scale:

*“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them...’” (Rev. 21:1-3).*

Paul also wrote about this event in 1 Cor. 15:28: *“When all things are subjected to [Jesus at the end of the Judgment], then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.”*

This concept is extremely important in understanding the Christian faith and how we raise our children to understand the bigger picture and why they (and we) can be motivated to live a faithful life of sacrifice and obedience (delayed gratification) for Christ. As I learned all of this over the past couple years, it brought a lot of joy and excitement as I began uncovering many powerful “hidden” truths taught throughout the Scriptures.

Just one more week to go! I hope you’re still enjoying and learning.

### Group Interaction:

- In light of all we’ve studied through these 8 weeks, what do you consider your “prize”? What treasure do you hope to “win” with your family? This can be answered in the short term, long term, relationally, spiritually—whatever you see as the goal of your common efforts.

## One Million Arrows Study for Parents

By Julie Ferwerda

- Have the things we've learned over the past weeks made a difference in how you see investing in the Kingdom, obedience, and delayed gratification? If so, share with the group how your thinking has changed.
- Read James 5:1-5 together. Who do you think James is warning—believers or unbelievers? In which era of history? What do you think James intention of this passage would be for American believers today?
- When you think of “heaven,” what are your impressions? Sometimes “bad theology” about our next phase of life in the Kingdom can make us apprehensive or not too eager to get there. As a group, share what you know about the future Kingdom based on Scripture. A great resource to reshape gloomy theology about the afterlife is the book by Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*.
- With the poor economy, one of the first things that is usually “dispensable” is tithing (whether to church, missionaries, orphans, etc.). How can you creatively continue to give faithfully, in spite of the financial crunch? Is there something you could give up each week/month, or is there a way your family or group could creatively earn money to keep up support?

## **Bring it Home:**

### **Jesus taught His disciple to TRUST...**

Day 1: Read Matthew 14:28-31

*Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"*

Day 2: Read Matthew 6:25-27

*"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?"*

Day 3: Read Matthew 9:2

*And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven."*

Day 4: Read Matthew 6:31-33

*"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles [unbelievers] eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."*

Day 5: Read Matthew 6:34

*"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

Day 6: Read Matthew 7:7-8

*"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."*

*Day 7: Read Matthew 10:29-31 "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows."*