

# Small Group Discussion Guide

Graduation Day: *How Will God Reward Us?* For the week of May 1 - 7, 2022

---

## Main Thought and Scriptures:

The resurrected Christ promised to return one day to judge the earth and usher in a new heaven and earth; a new age free from the effects of sin and death. Jesus gave a revelation of the end times to the Apostle John to give perspective and hope to a Christian community facing intense persecution. It describes two “resurrections” following the return of Christ where God’s judgments will be pronounced to both believers and unbelievers. This reality should have a profound impact on how we live our lives on earth.

### 1. The first resurrection will be for those faithful to Christ and will result in a judgment of eternal rewards.

*“Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed... they (the faithful in Christ) came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup>The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup>Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4-6 ESV)*

- This is known as the “bema” seat judgment analogous to an athletic competition where victorious athletes present themselves to judges to receive a reward.

### 2. For those who reject Jesus, the second resurrection will result in eternal separation from God.

*“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it... <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. <sup>13</sup>And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, **and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.** <sup>14</sup>Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup>And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:11-15 ESV)*

- Those whose names are not found in the “book of life,” due to their rejection of Christ, are cast into the “lake of fire” prepared for the devil and his angels (see Matthew 25:41).

### 3. We will all be judged according to what is recorded in Heaven's books.

*“...and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.” (v. 12)*

- Those who are faithful to Christ have their names written in the “book of life” and are granted eternal life in Heaven based on their relationship with Christ alone.
- Those who reject Christ do NOT have their names written in the “book of life” and are condemned to eternal separation from God.
- The Bible describes other books that record a Christian’s deeds after salvation. Our faithful deeds are recorded and will result in varying degrees of eternal rewards.

#### **4. While we are saved by grace through faith, we will be rewarded for the “good works” done after we've believed.**

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup>not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10 ESV)*

- While we don't earn our salvation and entry into Heaven through good works, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we do determine how blessed we will be in the next life based on how we have lived for God in this life:

*"There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. <sup>41</sup>There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. <sup>42</sup>So is it with the resurrection of the dead..." (1 Corinthians 15:40-42 ESV)*

- Considering all this, Christians should live their lives doing “good works” to love God and others (see Matthew 22:34-40), rather than living selfishly.
- We should also urgently share the Gospel with non-believers since we know that we will all face God’s judgment one day.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- As you reflect on the main thoughts and scriptures above and the weekend sermon, what is the Lord highlighting to you and why?
- How has the reality of eternal judgment and rewards affected your life?
- How do you think God wants you to live for Him in light of eternal rewards?

#### **Prayer:**

- Pray for one another to truly live for God and others in light of eternity.
- Pray for one unreached friend or family member that they will come to know Jesus and have their eternity secured as well.