

The Gospel

ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Week 9: Judgment and the End Times—Mt. 23-25

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

There are four crucial components for a group to maintain its health: Word, prayer, relationships, and reaching out. In this guide, you will study the biblical passage in three steps: observation, interpretation, and application. As the group leader, you are free to use any part of this guide that can assist you in achieving this goal. Remember that these group guides are designed to work in conjunction with our Matthew reading plan, so encourage your group to get a bookmark from church. Today we explore the idea that **because Christ is coming again to judge the living and the dead, the Gospel demands a decision of us.**

CONNECT

- What's something in our world today that makes you long for Jesus to set things right?
- When you think about standing before Jesus one day, what emotion comes up first? Joy, fear, peace, or something else?
- Can you think of a time when showing compassion to someone felt like you were really serving Jesus himself?

INTRODUCTION

In Matthew chapters 23-25, Jesus is unpacking for his disciples the stakes of our verdict concerning his claims and works. He discusses difficult cultural topics like the destruction of the Temple, as well as sweeping statements that transcend culture concerning the end of the age and his return. In the midst of it all, we find in our text a series of ultimatums being drawn, and we are left with decisions to make: between Christ and Temple, between the Kingdom and the world, and between eternal joy and eternal anguish.

OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

Read: Matthew 23:37-24:3

Discuss: Jesus' foretelling of the temple's destruction presents a shift in the understanding on man's means of worshiping God. What does this reveal about how people now approach God and by what means?

Read: Matthew 24:4-14 (see also 24:29-31)

Discuss: Jesus warned of deception, hardship, and persecution before his return, yet promised his coming in unmistakable glory. How do these truths shape a biblical understanding of hope in a broken world?

Read: Matthew 25:31-34, 41

Discuss: Both passages picture Jesus dividing people at his return: one taken, one left; some welcomed, others not. What does this reveal about his authority as Judge and the ultimate reality of his Kingdom?

APPLICATION

- The temple was meant to be a light to the nations, but now that role belongs to those who follow Jesus. How can we reflect his presence and invite others to worship God through Him?
- Since Jesus said the gospel will be preached to all nations before the end comes, how can we live with a sense of urgency and purpose in sharing his message today?
- Because Jesus' return will reveal who truly belongs to him, how should that reality shape the way we live and love others right now?

PRAYER

- Pray that our hearts would truly yearn for Jesus return.
- Pray also that we be filled with loving urgency concerning evangelism and the spread of the gospel.
- Pray that our churches would grow in godliness and righteousness as a fruit of God's grace.