



**REJECTION
OF THE KING
MATTHEW BOOK 4**

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**REJECTION
OF THE KING**

MATTHEW BOOK 4

APPENDIX 3 | CHART OF MAIN VIEWS

	Dispensational Premillennialism	Historical Premillennialism	Amillennialism	Postmillennialism
Will Jesus return physically?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
When will Jesus return?	After a 7-year tribulation; before the millennium.	After a 7-year tribulation; before the millennium.	Anytime; a detailed time frame is not important.	After the millennium.
Do the rapture and second coming of Christ occur at the same time?	No, they are events separated by either 7 years (pre-tribulation rapture) or 3½ years (mid-tribulation rapture).	Yes	Yes	Yes
Will there be a great tribulation?	Yes	Yes	The tribulation occurs any time Christians are persecuted or wars and disasters occur.	The tribulation is the conflict between good and evil since Jesus' death and resurrection.
Will Christians suffer during the tribulation?	Christians are either raptured before the tribulation (pre-tribulation rapture) or 3½ years into the tribulation (mid-tribulation rapture).	Yes, Christians will go through the tribulation and endure suffering and persecution for the cause of Christ.	Yes, Christians will suffer and endure persecution until Jesus returns; persecution will increase in the end.	Yes, Christians are called to share the gospel, and tribulation will occur when that gospel is opposed.
Will there be a literal 1,000-year millennium?	Yes, after the 7-year tribulation, Christ will return and reign for 1,000 years.	Yes, after the tribulation, Christ will return and reign for 1,000 years.	No, the millennium refers to the reign of Christ in the hearts of his believers.	No, the millennium refers to a period of peace when the gospel reaches all people.
Who is saved?	Christians only	Christians only	Christians only	Christians only
Is the modern state of Israel relevant to the prophecies in Revelation?	Yes	No	No	No
When was this view most held?	Became popular about 1860. Has increased in popularity.	The earliest view of the end times, emerging at the end of the first century.	Popularized in AD 400. Continues to be accepted today.	May have been popular as early as AD 300. Less popular today.



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- **Scriptural Support** | 2 Peter 3.8, Rom. 11.13-15, Dan. 12.2-3, John 5.28-29, Rev. 13.7
- **Prominent Theologians** | John Calvin, Martin Luther, Abraham Kuyper, Stanley Grenz, JI Packer

Postmillennialism | the belief that the millennial reign represents a large period of time in which the world will submit to Jesus Christ through the preaching of the gospel and peace and prosperity will reign. Jesus will return at the conclusion of the millennium.

- **Scriptural Support** | **Matt. 24.14, Rom. 11.13-15, Dan. 12.2-3, John 5.28-29, Rev. 20.4**
- **Prominent Theologians** | Johnathan Edwards, BB Warfield, Charles Hodge, RC Sproul, Doug Wilson

For a great discussion of the differences between these views, watch *An Evening of Eschatology*, found here:

<http://www.desiringgod.org/conference-messages/an-evening-of-eschatology>

'*Postmillennialism* seems to honor the power of the gospel and the promises for the Old Testament for the triumph of God's people over all the nations. *Amillennialism* seems to honor the warnings of bleak end times as well as the seamlessness between Christ's coming and the immediate destruction of death, the removal of the enemies of the cross, and the beginning of the new heavens and new earth. *Premillennialism* seems to honor the plainest meaning of Revelation 20 and the seemingly literal meaning of many Old Testament promises.'

– *An Evening of Eschatology* (information page)

³⁴ Truly, I say to you, **this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.**

³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Matthew 24.34-35

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APPENDIX 2 | FOUR MAIN ESCHATOLOGICAL VIEWS

The reason why people are so far apart on translating the details is because of the system that they are placing these details into. The story that you believe that God is telling greatly affects how the pieces work. Here are the four main views that exist in the Church (know that many people fit into hybrids of these models).

Dispensational Premillennialism | the belief that Jesus will come back to earth after a seven year tribulation and will rule during a 1000-year millennium of peace (most dispensational premillennialists also believe that believers will be raptured before the tribulation). In the tribulation many Jews turn to Christ and the Promised Land is returned to the nation of Israel.

- **Scriptural Support** | 1 Thess. 5.9, Rev. 3.20, Genesis 15.7-21, Rev. 4-19 (fact that the church is not mentioned)
- **Prominent Theologians** | Harry Ironside, John MacArthur, Charles Ryrie, Chuck Smith, J Nelson Darby, Norman Geisler

Historical Premillennialism | the belief that Christians will remain on Earth during the tribulation; the tribulation will purify the church by rooting out the false believers, and Jesus will return to reign on Earth for the millennium. The church has replaced Israel as God's chosen people.

- **Scriptural Support** | 2 Thess. 2.3-4, Rev. 2.22-23, Rev. 13.7, Jer. 7.6-7, Rom. 9.6-8
- **Prominent Theologians** | Early Church Fathers, Charles Spurgeon, George Ladd, John Piper, Francis Schaeffer

Amillennialism | the belief that the millennium is the spiritual reign of Christ in the hearts of His followers. The tribulation represents the persecution of Christians over time in the church age. References to Israel are representative to the people of God on earth.

WHAT JESUS SAYS ABOUT THE END TIMES

While there are differing definitions of the end, what can't be dismissed is what Jesus actually said. In the Olivet Discourse He lays out events that will proceed and that will be part of the end. Any theology of final things must include these elements (e.g. Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21).

Events before the End of the Age

- Many will claim to be the Messiah (people will be deceived)
- Wars, famine, earthquakes
- Believers persecuted and killed
- Believers will proclaim Jesus to kings
- Many will turn away from the faith
- Betrayed by parents, brothers, and friends
- Increase in wickedness
- Fearful events and signs from heaven

Signs of the End of the Age

- Jerusalem surrounded by armies and trampled by Gentiles
- Great tribulation
- False prophets will perform signs, miracles
- Sun darkens, moon doesn't shine, stars fall
- Severe ocean activity
- Jesus will appear in the sky
- Angels will gather God's elect

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

The material in this guide is intended to supplement the sermons preached on Sunday mornings. These booklets are prepared months in advance of the actual sermon series. The result is, as the Spirit leads, a preacher's sermon may diverge from the ideas presented each week.

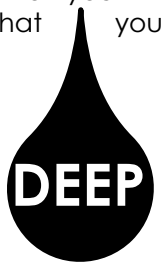
The study guide is designed to be used by individuals, families, and groups. Before you begin to read, pray that the Holy Spirit will open your eyes to see what He is teaching you in the Bible, and that He will give you the spiritual strength to do something about it.

Next, read the given Biblical text. Then read it again. Take notes. Underline in your Bible. Write down questions. Once you have spent time in God's Word, then work through the study and write out answers to the questions. Resist any temptation to skip over the personal questions. Though these questions are sometimes the most penetrating and difficult, they are designed to help you apply these truths to your life.

After you have spent time in the text on your own, it is important for you to share with others who are wrestling with the same text. The Bible is meant to be read and studied in community. So take the time to do it on your own first, and then consider gathering with others to discuss what you have learned.

Each section of this guide is organized to help individuals and groups go **D.E.E.P.** into gospel truth:

- **D- DISCUSS SERMON:** A key verse and a summary to help the group discuss the biblical text, answer basic questions, and review the sermon.
- **E- EXCHANGE VIEWS:** A general discussion question encouraging individuals to share their first reactions to the text or sermon. Often, this will inspire deeper examination into the text in a particular direction.
- **E-EXAMINE TEXT:** A series of questions related to the biblical text and the sermon. These questions are designed to help the group dig deeper into what the text actually says and, together, determine what it might mean.
- **P- PERSONALIZE TRUTH:** One or two questions to help apply the text to your personal life and experience.



HOW TO DOWNLOAD PAST SERMONS

Should you miss a sermon, there are several ways to listen, read, or watch sermons from this series. Please visit our network website and click on SERMONS at www.3strand.org. In addition to the sermon you are looking for, you will also find past sermon series preached at various 3Strand Network Churches.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE WITH YOUR FAMILY

The Bible teaches us that parents, not pastors, are responsible for the biblical and spiritual training of their kids. As you are studying and learning, you need to teach your kids, share with them how God is challenging you, and impart to them a passion for Christ, His Word, and His Way (See Deuteronomy 6.4-9). Parents, we encourage you to spend the week preparing your family, especially the older children, for the public gathering and the sermon on Sunday. Here are some specific ways to prepare your family for worship:

Family preparation should always include reading of the passage that will be preached on Sunday. As you read, remember that the intent is not to teach them everything about the passage. Not only do you want to expose them to the Word of God, you also want to demonstrate its importance in your lives.

Family preparation should always include an age-appropriate discussion about the text. Following the reading, begin an age-appropriate discussion using the booklet as a guide. Ask probing questions that fit their specific maturity as they look forward to sitting under the preached Word on Sunday.

Family preparation should always include prayer. This should be done as a family and individually. First, pray to understand the text. Then, pray for the needs of your own family, for the church, and for our city. Individually read and pray with each of your children throughout the week and try to dialogue with them as individuals about the passage.

**Your efforts, not your expertise, will set an example for your children, will make the church gathering more meaningful, and will help your family feel more cared for.*

APPENDICES FOR MATTHEW | BOOK FOUR

APPENDIX 1 | A BRIEF PRIMER ON ESCHATOLOGY

In this section of Matthew we have the Olivet Discourse, Jesus' description of the end times. There probably isn't an issue in the church that is more disagreed on, and from which some of the crazier theories begin to emerge. In order to talk about it, to converse honestly about what Jesus is saying, we need to have a foundational understanding of what the Bible say about what is to come. This appendix is set up to give a starting point by laying out: terms to know, what Jesus said about the end, and the four main views of eschatology.

HELPFUL TERMS

Church Age | the time from Pentecost in Acts 2 until Christ returns

Eschatology | study of the Bible's teaching about the events surrounding the Second Coming of Jesus

Millennium | the thousand year reign of Jesus on Earth described in Revelation 20

- **Premillennial** | *the millennium is a future event; Jesus return will initiate the millennium*
- **Amillennial** | *the millennium is symbolic of His present reign among His people*
- **Postmillennial** | *the millennium is a time in which most of the world submits to Jesus and is at peace; Jesus returns after the millennium*

Preterism | the belief that some, if not all, biblical prophecies about the end times refer to specific events that have already happened

Rapture | event when Jesus returns for His people

Tribulation | time when disasters occur on earth and those faithful to Jesus suffer persecution

The best way to use this guide is with a small group. As smaller expressions of our larger church body, small groups are where Christians can strive to learn together, love together, serve together, and go on mission together. Tim Keller has suggested that, *"The Primary Goal for the fellowship group is to develop a Christian community where Jesus Christ is experienced in his presence and power."* In other words, these groups are intended to be more than a group to "hang out with" and more than a typical bible study.

What should you expect as part of a small group?

- A welcoming atmosphere for strugglers and real sinners (Christ is for real sinners!) "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Mt. 9:13; "If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense-Jesus Christ, the Righteous One." 1 Jn. 2:1
- A family learning to live out of the Gospel "As you have received Christ Jesus, so live in Him..." Col.2:6 "I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge..." Eph. 3:17-19; "Let us love one another, for love comes from God...He sent His one and only Son" 1 Jn. 4:7,9
- A safe place to share your struggles, confess your sins, and expect to be pointed to Jesus. "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..." Rom. 8:1; "Confess your sins to one another..." James 5:16
- A family learning to celebrate grace! "Rejoice with those who rejoice..." Rom.12:15
- A place to be quick to listen and sympathize with another's struggles, and respond with compassion and prayer, and if you can, offer practical help to meet the need. Avoid superficial, pat answers that don't address and encourage the heart. "Be devoted to one another..." Rom. 12:10; "Everybody should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry..." James 1:19; "Pray for each other..." James 5:16; "Honor one another above yourselves...Rom. 12:10b; "mourn with those who mourn..." Rom.12:15

MATTHEW 25.31-46

WEEK 17 | THE SEPARATION

40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' **25.40**

Jesus ends his fourth major section of teaching on the end of the age with a sobering description of final judgment. At His first coming, Jesus came to the world as a servant King, intending to die for those who received Him. At His second coming, Jesus will come to the world as a conquering King, intending to judge those who rejected Him. Upon His return, Jesus will separate His sheep from the world's goats—believers from unbelievers. The distinguishing difference between the two will not be their mighty knowledge or their many works. It will be their love for the helpless and the hopeless—the least of these. Jesus' sheep are characterized by an unworldly compassion birthed out the love their own shepherd has shown to them. They are active in their love, yet, unaware of how it glorifies God proving that love for the unlovable is the natural response to God's love.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, or challenged?
2. What does Jesus mean when he says "...as you did it to the least of these my brothers, you did it to me?" In what way are these acts of love connected to loving Jesus?
3. Jesus condemnation of the goats is severe. How does it make you feel when Jesus says, "...as you did not do it to the least of these you did not do it to me." Why do you think you feel this way?
4. **Read 2 Corinthians 5.14-15.** What does this passage teach us about love? How will we know if we have truly believed the gospel?
5. Who is the "unlovable" that you struggle loving most? Poor? Imprisoned? Sick? Rebellious? Religious? How can this change?

- A place to worship God by enjoying one another and God's good gifts (new people, food, art, etc.) "Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate..." Luke 15

As you can see, the Gospel is never static, but moves us into grateful action. As we hear and believe the Gospel again and again, the love of Christ working within our hearts energizes us to practical works of love. We begin to ask, "What does loving my neighbor really look like?" This means that we will also want to avoid anything in our group that does not have this goal of Gospel motivation and love.

What should you not expect in a small group?

- A lengthy teaching monologue or lecture by one person.
- An overly- academic group of theological debaters who don't address matters/struggles of the heart, and how the Gospel applies to them (see I Cor.13:1).
- An affinity group to make you happy (Although sweet fellowship in Christ should occur and will bring joy!).
- A place to have your every need met (Although as we serve one another in love, many of your true needs will be met, prayed for, and clarified).

¹² And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹³ He said to them, "It is written, '**My house shall be called a house of prayer,**' but you make it a den of robbers."
Matthew 21.12-13



MATTHEW 21.1-11

WEEK 1 | THE KING ENTERS GOD'S CITY

Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest. 21.9

Jesus had spent His entire ministry in the rural areas, teaching about what He had come to do; now He was coming to do it. He enters Jerusalem to the reception of a king. Riding in on a donkey, He fulfills the prophecy and reflects the victory processional of a leader returning from battle. The people of Israel had been waiting for this moment, when their king would arrive. They celebrated. They cried out. They laid their coats on the road. In all of this they are declaring Him their Messiah. But their excitement was matched with an expectation. In Jesus they expected salvation, but it was an earthly rescue. They hoped for the destruction of the Romans and for power to be returned to the nation of Israel. How quickly things would change when Jesus did not meet their anticipation.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. Why did the people wave palm branches and lay their coats on the road? What does this show about how the people viewed Jesus?
3. Why does Jesus make such a scene as He enters into Jerusalem? Why not just sneak in through the side door?
4. Read **Matthew 20.25-28**. How does Jesus' entry compare/contrast with the description of servant leadership He had just given them?
5. What does your Jesus look like? Discuss the main attributes of Jesus that you tend to stress. How does this set Him up to disappoint you?

MATTHEW 25.14-30

WEEK 16 | THE LONG DELAY

21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 25.21

Jesus teaches another parable about the end of the age. The emphasis of the story is on the long journey of a landowner. Before he leaves, he entrusts his property to his servants, giving three different men three different "talents" (a monetary unit). Then, the man leaves and is gone for a "long time". When the owner is away, each servant uses what has been entrusted to him differently. Two of the servants actively reproduce what they were given while one passively saves it. Upon his return, the owner rewards faithfulness and punishes unfaithfulness. The story foreshadows the time between Jesus' ascension and his 2nd coming. Essentially, Jesus intends for his servants not only to be watchful for his return, but also industrious while they wait. Faithfulness is less about working for His approval and more about stewarding for His glory.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, or challenged?
2. Why were the first two workers rewarded? What was their reward? According to verses 24-30, what was the 3rd worker guilty of? What was his punishment?
3. What do you think it means when the owner is described as a "hard man"? How does this make you feel about God?
4. **Read 1 Corinthians 12**. What talents, gifts, or experiences has God given you to steward? How well have you stewarded these? Why?
5. When reading this parable, do you identify more with the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd worker? Why? How does the gospel empower you to rejoice and/or repent?

MATTHEW 21.12-32

WEEK 2 | THE KING CLEANSSES GOD'S HOUSE

Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen. And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith. 21.21-22

It did not take long for Jesus to overstay His welcome. After the celebration of His arrival, Jesus marches into the temple and starts flipping over tables. For the Jews this would have been very confusing. He was supposed to come and affirm the Jews and attack the Romans. Instead, here He was cleaning out the temple – the symbol of the Jewish faith. His anger is aimed at how the religious function had stripped the meaning out of the faith. No longer were people being healed, served, and loved. Instead, people were being given merchandise to purchase. It is very easy to allow our faith to become routine, apathetic, and consumeristic. The solution to this is to remember who is at the helm. If God were simply a product, then once we had Him, He could lose luster. Since He is alive, we must maintain a relationship with all of its passionate ups and downs. Jesus main point here is about the importance of prayer and its connection to the life of the believer.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. Why is Jesus so upset about what is happening at the temple? Can you think of some modern examples of this?
3. Why does Jesus kill the fig tree? What does it reveal to us about the nature of prayer?
4. Read **Proverbs 15.8**. What is it that God actually desires? What are some things we prioritize over this?
5. What are some ways that you can rearrange your habits (liturgy) to make God's desire more central to your life?

MATTHEW 24.36-25.13

WEEK 15 | THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT

But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 24.36

Every few years a well-meaning Christian leader claims to have 'seen the signs' and makes a declaration of Jesus' return. Every time, the date and time passes, the followers are bewildered, and the signs are returned to be reread for the next prophecy. Jesus wants us to know that the day and time is not our concern (He says He doesn't even know). Our lives are not to figure God out, but to prepare ourselves for Him. It's not about getting ourselves ready for a moment, but being transformed from the inside out so that our lives are always in a state of readiness. Many believe that they can do what they want now, and that they will simply get serious about their faith later, but Jesus warns them: you don't know that there will be a later. A faithful life begins now.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. How does Jesus tell us to prepare for His coming?
3. How do Jesus' comments about not knowing the day or the hour fit with His teaching about seeing the signs of the end?
4. Read **Revelation 16.15, 19.7-8**. How does the practice of repentance and obedience keep us clothed in white?
5. In what ways does the impending return of Christ create a sense of urgency in us? In what ways should it bring us peace?

MATTHEW 21.23-32

WEEK 3 | THE KING CONFIRMS GOD'S AUTHORITY

Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him. 21.31-32

Jesus had just insulted the entire Jewish faith by calling the temple a 'den of robbers,' and threatening to produce no more fruit from them. The leaders of the temple wanted an explanation; they wanted to know who He thought He was. What they really wanted was a way to appease Him and make Him leave quietly. Jesus refuses to be 'handled.' He turns the questioning on them, making their hypocrisy clear, and denying them the answer they wanted to use against Him. But then Jesus goes on the offensive. He tells the leaders that their hypocrisy does not fool God. It doesn't matter if you can look good and spin words...what matters is what you actually believe and do. The sinner who turns away from their sin will be shown grace. Those who trust in themselves and reject God (no matter what they say) will receive wrath.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. How do Jesus' questions expose the hypocrisy of the religious leaders?
3. Who do the two sons in the story represent? Which one do you identify with more?
4. Read **John 14.6**. How do Jesus' exclusive claims help us to reveal religious hypocrisy? How can tolerance just be another version of hypocrisy?
5. Deeper faith is experienced through repentance. What are some things you must turn from in your life in order to obey God's law?

MATTHEW 24.29-35

WEEK 14 | THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 24.35

There are two points in life that matter more than any other: birth and death. The same is true for the world we live in; we can understand our place best when we know where we came from and where we are going. In this section, Jesus moves from talking about the signs of the end to talking about what it all points to: the Coming of the Son of Man, the return of Jesus. There is a lot of disagreement about what Jesus means when He says: *Immediately after the tribulation and this generation will not pass away until all these things take place*, but what is agreed is that the word of God that created the world will remake it in glory and He will rule over it. That gives reason and focus for the way we live our lives as we await this final glory.

QUESTIONS |

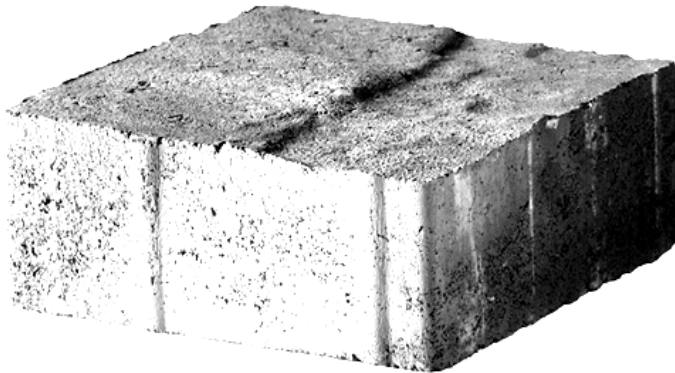
1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. What is the most important aspect of the Coming of the Son of Man that we must hold on to? Why is this so important to how we live now?
3. What are the differing views of the statement: *this generation will not pass away until all these things take place*?
4. Read **1 Thessalonians 4.13-18**. What does this tell us about the intermediate state? How is this helpful in our understanding of the end times?
5. How can spending all of your time thinking about the return of Jesus bring anxiety and fear? How can we keep ourselves from this?

21.12-13

MATTHEW 24.15-28

WEEK 13 | THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

**'The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes'?**
43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be
taken away from you and
given to a people producing its fruits.
44 And the one who falls on this stone
will be broken to pieces;
and when it falls on anyone,
it will crush him.
MATTHEW 21.42-44



21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Matthew 24:21-22

Much of chapter 24 Jesus discusses the end of history and his second coming with final judgement. This section includes an allusion to the impending siege of Jerusalem and destruction of the temple. In 70AD, roughly forty years after Jesus prophecy, the Roman army enters the city goes into the temple and removes all sacred elements of Israel's worship and burns the temple to the ground. First century historian Josephus said, "No other city ever suffered such things". With no temple there is no place for the Mosaic sacrificial system to take place to atone for sin. No daily sacrifices by priests or annual festivals of national atonement. While this is still mourned by the people of Israel who regularly cry out at the remaining "Wailing Wall" those who are in Christ have no need for sorrow. No temple or sacrifice is needed for us to have our sins removed and relationship with God restored. With Jesus perfect sacrifice for sin on the cross he declared "It is Finished!"

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. What do verses 23-28 teach us about the nature of Jesus return? How is it helpful in discerning false teachers and prophets?
3. How does the phrase "lead astray, if possible, even the elect" provide Christians with hope even in the face of great difficulty? See Romans 8:30-39
4. Read **Revelation 21:1-6**. Discuss this picture of the new restored city of God in these verses compared to what Jesus describes will happen to Jerusalem this section.
5. What are some of the practical implications of this section for the life and hope of a Christian?

MATTHEW 21.33-46

WEEK 4 | REJECTED STONE

'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? ⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. 21:42-43

Like a master cultivating a vineyard, from the beginning all God created belongs to him. While sin has corrupted his world, God choose to bless and work through a specific people, Israel. They are set apart for a purpose, to bear fruit in faithfully worshiping God and pointing other nations to Him. As God engages with His people through a succession of prophets the "workers in the vineyard" are consistent in their violent rejection of the master's "servants". Finally the master sends his son who is brutally killed by the vineyard's tenants in hopes they would receive the vineyard for themselves. The parable's meaning is plain in showing Israel's response to prophets, rejection of the Son, and ultimately God removing the kingdom from them and giving to others. Favor from God is not be used as an opportunity to cast off the authority of God. Those who reject Jesus, the Son, will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. How do the actions of the tenants in the parable display their attitude toward the owner/God? What was the "fruit" the tenants were supposed to produce?
3. Who does God transfer possession of the kingdom to? What does God expect from those he has given the kingdom to?
4. Read **Daniel 2:34-35**. How does this relate to Jesus teaching regarding the stone that crushes? What does this tells us about how God will respond to all the kingdoms of men?
5. How have you rejected God's commands and call on your life? In light of verse 45/46 how can knowledge of sin not lead to conviction and repentance?

MATTHEW 24.3-14

WEEK 12 | THE END IS COMING

*¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved.¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. **24.13-14***

False prophets, some even claiming to be the Savior, international conflict, violent persecution of Christians, natural and economic disasters will constantly be present in our world between Jesus' resurrection and his promised return, final judgement, and eternal kingdom. The presence of these things should not be welcomed or hopelessly feared; neither should they be used to determine the time or proximity of Christ's return in history. Jesus is clear "the end is not yet." While the disciples desire certainty surrounding the timing of Jesus return, Jesus desires the disciples to have certainty on the nature of their mission; to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God throughout all the nations of the world. Jesus knows having a clear "end date" could easily lead his disciples to grow lax in their duty and mission. Jesus does not want us concerned with when he is returning. We are to have hope and peace he is returning and we should concern ourselves with his mission until he does.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. How can the increase of "lawlessness" in our world lead the love of many to grow cold? How can a call to endurance during great trials and suffering actually lead to hope?
3. What comprehensive task will be completed before the end comes? What has God called the church and individual Christian's role to be in bringing this to fruition?
4. Read **John 20:19-22**. How does Jesus encourage fearful disciples? How does Holy Spirit fueled worship lead disciples from fear to mission?
5. How can fascination and preoccupation with "the end" keep us from being engaged with the work and call Jesus has for our lives in the present?

MATTHEW 22.1-14

WEEK 5 | REJECTED GUESTS

13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and **then the end will come.**

Matthew 24.13-14



8 Then he said to his servants "The wedding feast is ready, but those invite were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find." 14 For many are called, but few are chosen." **22:8-9,14**

Again Jesus teaches that those who are the apparent heirs to the kingdom of heaven have rejected the clear invitation of the king to come and celebrate in his kingdom. Great preparations have been made for a glorious feast, numerous invitations have been sent out, and yet none come. Some ignore, some remain focused on their own endeavors, while some are openly hostile and violent to the King's servants. Rejection of a royal invitation and assaulting the King's messengers is a declaration of rebellion against the King himself. The King's wrath is righteously executed towards the unworthy, but there is still a feast to be had. The call to the feast goes out far beyond the original invitation and the hall is full of all kinds of people. While this would appear to lower the standards of those admitted to the feast, a man was cast out for not being properly clothed. The king still demands perfection to enter his good kingdom. Only being clothed in the perfection of Jesus is sufficient to join the feast.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. The man who is asked about his wedding garment had no response to why he belonged in the feast. What would your answer be? What answer does the gospel provide?
3. How does this parable show the comprehensive nature of God's role in salvation? What do the invited bring to the table? What does it mean "many are called but few are chosen"?
4. Read **Zachariah 3:3-5**. What does this teach us about God's holiness and our need to be "properly clothed" before a perfect God?
5. If Christians are to be servants of the king, what is our role in the wedding feast? Who will you invite to the hall?

MATTHEW 23.37-24.2

WEEK 11 | WOE TO THE JEWS

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! **23.27**

In contrast to the woes earlier in the chapter, Jesus laments over Jerusalem—the city of God. Jesus recounts the historical rejection of God's chosen people; one that is coming to a climax with the rejection of God's chosen Son. Jesus' words evidence His sincere love and grief over their refusal to find refuge under the loving wing of God. Jerusalem will be desolated; but Jesus laments this reality. The image of the mother bird gathering and covering her brood is a familiar one. Moses used it in his farewell sermon. It a picture of love, tender care, and even a willingness to die to protect others. Jesus did die for the sins of the world, including the nation of Israel: but "His own received Him not".

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. What is the house that Jesus refers to and what will happen to it? When will the Jews welcome Jesus and call him blessed?
3. What does this passage teach us about the tension that exists between a God who is perfectly holy and just? How does the cross resolve this tension?
4. **Read Colossians 1.15-20.** How does it make you feel to know that our Creator grieves over His creation?
5. Chapter 23 combines Jesus' severe judgement on hypocrites with his sincere lament over Jerusalem. How can we ensure we strike the right balance between boldness in declaring the truth of God's judgement and warmth towards those who deserve it? How can we prevent boldness from becoming coldness?

MATTHEW 22.15-22

WEEK 6 | REJECTED RENDERING

*²⁰ And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" ²¹ They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." **22.20-21***

Religious Pharisees hope to weaken Jesus influence with people by involving him in a political controversy regarding an unpopular Roman poll tax. To pay or not to pay, that is the question. If Jesus affirms payment he is encouraging a sign of submission to the oppressive Roman government. If he discourages payment Jesus could be accused of treason. Politics and worship have often had a muddy relationship. Errors are made when they are joined as equals or completely divorced from each other. Jesus response transcends the original question and does not afford his opponents an opportunity to divide his following. Jesus both affirms the role of earthy governments "render to Caesar" while reminding everyone there is one supreme ruler over universe. While the coin is made by Caesar with his image on it and belongs to him; people are made in the image of God. All that we have and all that we are belongs to Him.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. How does the truth of God's supreme authority over all things affect how we view political issues, leaders, or governments?
3. What ways have you seen politics divide Jesus followers? It what ways have you either ignored your stewardship responsibilities by disengaging from politics or treating politics as an idol?
4. **Read Romans 13:1-7.** What do these verses teach us about how Christians are to engage with the earthly authorities placed over us? What is difficult about this teaching?
5. Discuss what Christians' role in modern politics should look like as individuals and as churches.

MATTHEW 23.13-36

WEEK 10 | WOE TO THE TEACHERS

*²⁷ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. **23.27***

Jesus' woes are the angry laments of wounded love, incited by compassion for those whom religious leaders have led astray (see 23:37). Second-century rabbis, probably passing on many ideas from the Pharisees of Jesus' day, harshly condemned hypocrisy. Fundamentalist Christians often look down on these bible-thumping Pharisees, blind to the reality of their belief in a similar sort of self-righteousness (Their pride makes them twice as bad!). There are well-meaning, but false preaching, teachers leading many astray with a false gospel of works. Jesus reveals that no amount of external religious purity is going to clean what is internally dirty. He forces us to see just how deficient, broken, and rebellious we are; and He calls us to righteousness beyond what obedience to moral rules can achieve. Jesus reveals a standard of holiness so impossibly high we find ourselves desperate for a savior—to make us righteous.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. In Verse 16-26 Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees "blind" five times, what are they blind to?
3. What are the weightier matters of the law that Jesus refers to in verse 23? How should our commitment to religious practice or theological conviction affect our love?
4. **Read Titus 2.11-14.** According to Paul, how do we avoid falling into either the ditch of law or lawlessness (self-indulgence or self-righteousness)?
5. What WOE would Jesus direct toward you? How do you need to change and how does the gospel help you do that?

MATTHEW 22.23-33

WEEK 7 | REJECTED RESURRECTION

*³¹ And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: ³² 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living. **22.31-32***

People are easily divided by political issues and parties. Even more pronounced are divisions among various religious/doctrinal camps. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They came to Jesus with a question about marriage in the afterlife they thought clearly showed belief in resurrection to be problematic. Jesus does not seek to understand their "view" of things and simply declares "you are wrong". God is big, eternal, and several aspects of His nature are mysterious. However, there are things God has revealed about himself in His word that are true and right; meaning some things are false and wrong. Jesus answers the Sadducees doctrinal question by showing them their ignorance of scripture and, by extension, God's power. God declares in Exodus "I am the God of Abraham..." not "I was the God of Abraham." God IS God, He is alive, and He is the God of the living, meaning those who have their faith in Him will be resurrected to live with Him forever.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. What does Jesus mean when he says we will be "like angels in heaven"? Why won't there be marriage in heaven?
3. What are some of the seemingly "hypothetical" questions about God, Jesus, after life you have heard those who do not follow Jesus ask to try to show inconsistency in Christian faith/belief?
4. Read **Colossians 3:1-4.** What picture does this paint of the resurrection? How should this impact the way we see and live in the world today?
5. When you wrestle with doctrines, will, or commands of God do you rely most on your intellect, emotions, or experiences? How does each of these fail us compared to God's revealed word?

MATTHEW 23.1-12

WEEK 9 | WOE TO THE PREACHERS

"Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." **23.12**

Chapter 23 amounts to an unrestrained tongue lashing against the Scribes and Pharisees. Even though Jesus speaks directly to the crowds and his disciples, He is indirectly condemning the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. They do not practice what they preach because what they preach is impossible to live. Even though they appear cloaked in righteousness, Jesus strips them naked to reveal the self-righteous idolatry of their hearts. Jesus declares that their "righteousness" is not about honoring God at all; it is about receiving honor, obtaining position, and wielding power. Their religion is about achieving greatness BEFORE men and FROM God. Jesus warns against following such men, for they are not as great as they appear. On the contrary, God humbles men who seek to be recognized and expect to be served. The men that God exalts are those who deny their own greatness, and humbly serve.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. Identify the different sinful behaviors, or attitudes that Jesus condemns the Scribes and Pharisees for? How would you summarize the attitudes of their heart?
3. According to v. 8-10, the Scribes and Pharisees abused their authority? How does this inform our own relationships with our pastors, teachers, or mentors?
4. **Read Matthew 6.1-4.** What exactly is Jesus warning us about? Why do we struggle to heed Jesus warning?
5. Why didn't the Pharisees "practice" what they "preached?" How does the gospel change both what we preach and practice, and help us to fight this kind of hypocrisy?

MATTHEW 22.34-46

WEEK 8 | REJECTED LAW

³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **22.37-39**

The verbal challenges seeking trap Jesus in controversy continue. The first question was political, the second was doctrinal, and the third concerned the law, the commands of God. Jesus teaching on the law was well documented in his sermon on the mount. All of the commands of the Law and Prophets can be condensed down to loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and loving our neighbors as ourselves. While seemingly simple, these two commands have comprehensive implications in how we relate to God and to people. Jesus was tested but now he turns the table and questioned those who test him. "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" The savoir of God's people will not be the son an earthly king but the only Son of God, Jesus. Our response and relationship to Jesus will determine our ability to love God and love people. We can question God, but ultimately we are the ones who need to answer to him.

QUESTIONS |

1. What part of the text or sermon had the greatest impact on you? Where were you most encouraged, intrigued, challenged?
2. What does it mean to love the God with all your heart, soul, and mind? Why does Jesus call this the great and first commandment? How does failing this keep us from loving our neighbors?
3. How does the Pharisees answer about the identity of the Messiah show an incomplete understanding about the Savior's nature? How does it limit what he comes to save?
4. **Read Romans 13:8-10.** How is loving your neighbor as yourself fulfilling the commandments of God? How is love more than simply not doing wrong to or harming your neighbor?
5. In what ways have you questioned God? How have you seen God's word question you and your life? How have you responded?

²⁷ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
For you are like whitewashed tombs,
which **outwardly appear beautiful,**
but within are full of dead people's bones
and all uncleanness. ²⁸ So you also
outwardly appear righteous to others,
but within you are full of hypocrisy
and lawlessness.
Matthew 23.27-28

