

# JUDGMENT

— Matthew 19:1—25:46 —

## PERFECTING THE KINGDOM

Book Four in a Sermon Series  
through the Gospel of Matthew  
at



# **JUDGMENT:** **PERFECTING THE KINGDOM**

**Matthew 19:1—25:46**

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*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be  
preached in all the world for a witness unto  
all nations; and then shall the end come.*

Matthew 24:14

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Judgment is not something that we like to think about. We often think of punishment as the result of judgment, but that is not the way the judicial (law) term is used in the Bible (and in courts today). A judgment is simply a decision made through comparison. This could be a comparison of a person's actions with the laws of a nation to determine consequences, a comparison of two types of things to choose one, or a comparison of facts with opinion to discern truth.

In this section of the book of Matthew, we will see Jesus judging (comparing) actions, objects, and claims for the purpose of perfecting the Kingdom. Remember that perfection has the idea of "wholeness." This includes both completeness and purity. His Kingdom will not be

perfected until all who will believe have joined the Kingdom and those who have believed are ultimately purified with new, glorious bodies.

But even before we have those new glorified bodies, we can still “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:12) because Jesus has already “given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus takes time to teach us about our relationships, positions, opposition, and rewards in His kingdom so that we can make good judgments as we serve and represent Him.

Do not miss this important truth: Everyone will be judged (Hebrews 9:27). But the children of God and the children of the devil will experience very different judgments. Believers will be judged (a comparison to discern truth) to determine what rewards they will receive. Unbelievers will be judged (also a comparison to discern truth) to determine what punishment they will receive.

As believers we can look forward to Christ’s judgment and live a rewarding life that glorifies Him. Part of this is warning unbelievers to escape the “wrath to come” (Matthew 3:7).

## **MATTHEW 19:1-30**

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*But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them,  
With men this is impossible; but with  
God all things are possible.*

Matthew 19:26

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**Relationships in the Kingdom.** God chose to create and to redeem man because He desired relationship with us. It should not surprise us that the devil is always attacking relationships—both in the church and in the home.

In our passage today, Jesus teaches about relationships in His Kingdom. The Pharisees ask Him about the marriage relationship and whether divorce is allowed in an attempt to trap Him in His words. At the same time, the disciples, after their attempt to protect Jesus, are corrected for trying to keep children away from Him. Jesus sees all believers as His children and welcomes us to Himself. Finally, a young wealthy man comes to Jesus seeking assurance that he will receive eternal life because of his works. Jesus challenges this man with another principle of Kingdom relationships: to invest in others. This exposed the man's selfishness and pride. Disappointed, he leaves Jesus. As we study this passage today, keep your eyes and hearts open to learn more about how we can glorify God as we live on this earth through our Kingdom relationships.

PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 1

Matthew 19:1-30

**MATTHEW 20:1-28**

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*And whosoever will be chief among you, let  
him be your servant.*

Matthew 20:27

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**Recognition in the Kingdom.** Our God is a generous, gracious, and giving God. But sometimes we are still dissatisfied. We can compare ourselves to others and allow covetousness to bring bitterness and anger into our lives. Remember that it is our own sin that brings these attitudes, but we tend to blame God (or others) when we do not receive what we think we deserve.

So what do we deserve? Because of sin, we deserve death and punishment. But Jesus came to this earth so that He could be mocked, condemned, beaten, and crucified...for **our** sin.

His grace should not be an excuse to complain about what we do or do not have in this physical life. It should not be an excuse to demand things He has never promised to give us, things that He knows would not be good for us.

Our response to His grace should be one of gratefulness and service in humility.

PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 2

Matthew 20:1-28

**MATTHEW 20:28—21:11**

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*And when he was come into Jerusalem, all  
the city was moved, saying, Who is this?*

Matthew 21:10

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**Recognition of the King.** Jesus was not the Messiah that many expected Him to be. He did not launch a media campaign or crush the Roman occupying force. Instead, He served those He met and those who followed Him. Though Jesus does conquer sin, death, and Satan, He came with compassion for those bound by sin, death, and Satan.

While the people celebrated the miracles which He did, many followed Him as entertainment or because He was popular or because of what they **hoped** He would do (rather than what He said He would do). The people of Jerusalem would welcome Jesus as the King of the Jews, but a few days later they were demanding that He be crucified.

Outward devotion and praise of God is not the worship God demands. True worship is “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). How would you answer the people who asked about Jesus in Matthew 21:10, “Who is this?”



PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 3

Matthew 20:28—21:11

**MATTHEW 21:12-27**

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*And said unto them, It is written, My house  
shall be called the house of prayer; but ye  
have made it a den of thieves.*

Matthew 21:13

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**Rebuke by the King.** Part of Judgment is identifying facts in order to discern truth. As we read about Jesus cleansing the Temple of the money-changers, we may be alarmed at His actions. But in the Jewish context and the rules of Judaism, Jesus' actions were entirely appropriate. In fact, after He chased out the money-changers, Jesus calmly remained in the Temple courtyard and welcomed those with physical needs as well as children.

The next morning, Jesus cursed a fig tree which soon withered and died. His disciples were amazed at the immediate results of Jesus' command. Jesus encourages them to have genuine faith as they serve God.

While His disciples and other followers rejoiced in the authority Jesus displayed over sickness, corruption, and nature, the chief priests and Jewish elders were not pleased. They question the Source of Jesus' authority since they had not approved Him to be a rabbi. Jesus knows their hearts and exposes their fear of man with His response.

PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 4

Matthew 21:12-27

**MATTHEW 21:28-46**

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*But last of all he sent unto them his son,  
saying, They will reverence my son.*

Matthew 21:37

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**Rebels in the Kingdom.** During Jesus' public ministry the Jewish religious leaders kept challenging His authority. Rather than believing His words and His works, they rebuked Him and manipulated the people to keep them away from Him. In today's passage, Jesus gives two parables which illustrate those who appear to love God outwardly but do not love Him in their hearts.

First, Jesus tells about two sons who are sent by their father to work. Neither son obeys immediately, but one does eventually obey. One had outward obedience, the other had obedience in his heart.

Jesus then tells of a businessman who sent employees to harvest his vineyard and press the fruits into juice. The manager of the vineyard abuses and kills the employees which are sent, and he eventually kills the owner's son thinking that he would then inherit the vineyard. Such wickedness over land is nothing new! But the owner of the land never loses ownership. The manager suffers destruction as the consequences of his own wrong choices. The Pharisees realize Jesus is describing them!

PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 5

Matthew 21:28-46

## **MATTHEW 22:1-22**

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*For many are called, but few are chosen.*

Matthew 22:14

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**Rejection of the King.** The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Chief Priests were not the only ones who rejected Jesus. Some who had followed Him out of convenience later abandoned Him when the path became more difficult. Sadly, many of those who viewed themselves as educated, elite, or enlightened failed to see themselves as empty without Christ. But Jesus illustrates through a parable that His Kingdom is open and accessible to those who simply come to Him, not based upon human qualities or qualifications.

But Jesus' acceptance of all with equality (rather than giving special attention to people who did good works) angered the Pharisees. They continued to look for ways to discredit Jesus. And their attempts continued to be failures. Jesus could not be tricked. He could not be manipulated or coerced into sin. In today's passage, they try to wedge Jesus between pleasing the people or pleasing the government. Jesus escapes their trap by focusing His attention on pleasing God.

We also can escape much stress and fear when we focus on pleasing God rather than pleasing other people or organizations, especially those who reject Jesus as the King of Kings.

PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 6

Matthew 22:1-22

**MATTHEW 22:23-46**

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*And no man was able to answer him a word,  
neither durst any man from that day forth  
ask him any more questions.*

Matthew 22:46

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**Rejection of the King.** In our last lesson, the Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a question about taxes. They are back in today's passage, but first, the Sadducees display their own hypocrisy with a question about the resurrection. One of the key differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees is that the Sadducees do not believe in any resurrection or in any spirits, but the Pharisees believe in both (Acts 23:8). Yet, the Sadducees ask Jesus about future events after the resurrection of the dead!

Jesus begins by exposing their real problem: "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). When people teach about the Word of God without actually knowing the Word or His Power, they will always have a wrong understanding of who God is and what He does.

Two more times in this chapter the Pharisees try to trick Jesus, and each time they are the ones defeated. Be confident in truth. False teachers may oppose, but God's Word will always prevail!



PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 7

Matthew 22:23-46

**MATTHEW 23:1-22**

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*And whosoever shall exalt himself  
shall be abased; and he that shall  
humble himself shall be exalted.*

Matthew 23:12

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**Religion Versus the King.** Following Jesus' discussions with the Pharisees and Sadducees who tried to trap Him, Jesus now addresses the larger audience. He explains that the Pharisees and Sadducees are examples of those in religion which demand works for acceptance. Rather than accepting man because of his works, God accepts those who believe in Him without works, simply by faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Jesus specifically rebukes those who demand rituals and traditions as a means of expanding their religion. He exposes their hypocrisy, flawed thinking, and dangerous results.

There is nothing wrong with guidelines to help us in serving the Lord and being organized in our worship. But following a list of rules can never produce worship of God who loves us unconditionally. Instead, our worship of God who is merciful and gracious should result in obedience, not to a list but to our Lord Jesus Christ.

PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 8

Matthew 23:1-22

**MATTHEW 23:23—24:2**

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*Even so ye also outwardly appear  
righteous unto men, but within ye are  
full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*

Matthew 23:28

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**Religion Versus the King.** As we learned in our last lesson, true worship of God is not produced by obedience, but it should produce obedience. That means that obedience is the result of worship not the cause or definition of it. Some may be tempted to take that to the other extreme and to wrongly declare that there is now no need for obedience.

In His rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus explains that paying tithes does not make them right with God, but if we are right with God we should tithe. He shows that outward good works are not a replacement for righteousness in the heart, but a righteous heart will produce outward good works.

Sadly, the scribes and Pharisees were so influential in the society—partly because of the religious customs but also because they had made agreements with the Roman rulers—that much of the Jewish population in Jerusalem had abandoned true worship of God. Jesus cries out because of His desire to have welcomed them to Himself, but they had refused. I pray that you will not make the same mistake!

PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 9

Matthew 23:23—24:2

**MATTHEW 24:1-31**

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*For many shall come in my name, saying,  
I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*  
Matthew 24:5

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**The World at His Coming.** As Jesus prepares His disciples for His second coming, there are several signs that remind us of His first coming. Perhaps most noticeable is the warning that there will be many who claim to be the Messiah (Christ) and that there will be many false prophets.

As we study, examine what you have been taught about Jesus—who He is, what He came to do, and why He is coming back. Then consider how you can share the truth of Jesus with others. Without Christ, they are condemned to death and destruction.

Jesus also explains that immediately before His second coming will be a time called the Tribulation. But when those who have rejected Him see Him coming, they will be sad. They will realize that they have rejected Truth.

PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 10

Matthew 24:1-31

**MATTHEW 24:32—25:13**

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*Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*  
*Matthew 24:44*

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**Awaiting His Coming.** The Bible teaches that Jesus could return at any moment. There is no other event which has to happen before He comes back except for the Father sending Him. In fact, Jesus said, “that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matthew 24:36). His coming will happen instantly. No one will “watch” it happen. It will simply happen, and people will see that something has happened and then try to figure it out.

But knowing that Jesus could return at any moment may give some the idea that we should just be idle, waiting for Him to return. Paul corrected that way of thinking in 2 Thessalonians, but Jesus had already discussed it here in today’s passage. The word Jesus used to instruct His listeners as they wait for His return is “Watch.” This word is the same as “be vigilant” which means to be “on the lookout” or “observant.” It requires action, not idleness.



PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 11

Matthew 24:32-25:13

### **MATTHEW 25:14-30**

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*His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

*Matthew 25:23*

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**Faithful Until His Coming.** To help us understand the active nature of His command to “Watch” (Matthew 25:13), Jesus gives us the Parable of the Talents. In this parable, a business owner gives various responsibilities and resources to three of his employees. He travels far away and then comes back, just as Jesus had explained that He will do.

When the owner returns, he finds that two of his employees (servants) have used their resources wisely, and he rewards them. One has failed to use his resources at all, so the owner takes away the resources he had as well as removed his position and privileges.

As God’s children, we do not receive salvation because of our works, and we cannot lose salvation because of works—or a lack of works. But we can lose rewards in heaven—position and privilege in His kingdom—because of our sinful choices in this life.

Let us strive to be faithful until His return!

PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 12

Matthew 25:14-30

**MATTHEW 25:31-46**

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*Then shall the King say unto them on his  
right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father,  
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from  
the foundation of the world.*

*Matthew 25:34*

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**Rewards at His Coming.** In today's passage Jesus concludes His teaching about His second coming and the end of the world. He explains that when He returns, all humanity will be gathered before Him. He knows who are true believers and who are not. He will separate them—not according to their works, but according to their identity: what they **are**, not what they have **done**.

But that does not mean that what we do does not matter. Those who are sheep (believers) are accepted in His kingdom and then rewarded for the good they have done. Those who are goats (unbelievers) are rejected from His kingdom and rewarded (punished) for the evil they have done.

The sheep will enjoy life eternal. The goats will have everlasting punishment.

PERFECTING THE KINGDOM, Lesson 13

Matthew 25:31-46



## **MATTHEW 26:1—28:20**

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*And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!*  
Matthew 27:29

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In our final series on Matthew, we'll see the details of Jesus' passion: His willingness to die in our place. Some will realize who He is and worship Him. Some will be disappointed that He is not who they thought He would be and will betray Him. Others will personally learn what Jesus means when He taught His disciples to be a servant.

But all who believed in Him will have their faith tested when Jesus is nailed to a cross and buried in a tomb. Even after He rises from the dead, some believe immediately while others continue to struggle to believe He could actually be alive.

Still, Jesus remains compassionate, merciful, and gracious. He draws His disciples back to Himself and commissions them (and us!) to be His representatives.

***“Go ye therefore.” (Matthew 28:19)***