

# Apostles Creed

## “He will come to judge”

Week 8 | August 6th, 2023  
Community Group Discussion Guide

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

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#### **Citizens Basics**

*Sunday, August 13 | 11am-12pm*

We offer Citizens Basics a few times a year for anyone who is new to our church.

Led by various pastors and staff, this class consists of 30 minutes of teaching and 15 minutes of Q&A, with the goal of giving an overview of our vision as a church and how you can be a part of that vision.

Lunch and childcare is provided, but please register in advance.

#### [MORE INFO + REGISTRATION](#)

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#### **South CLT Neighborhood Cookout**

*Saturday, August 25 | 5pm-7pm*

One of our values as a church is that of presence, the ability to show up and engage with one another who live, work, and play close to us. To that end, we are hosting a South Charlotte Neighborhood Cookout on August 25th to connect people within our broader church family who live in that area.

If you live in Ballantyne, Pineville, Steel Creek, Fort Mill, LoSo or any of the surrounding area, come join us and meet others who call Citizens home!

Please RSVP for location and further details!

#### [MORE INFO + REGISTRATION](#)

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## **Membership Class**

*Sunday, September 17th | 4pm-6:30pm*

We believe the church is central to all God is doing in the world. When you read the New Testament, wherever the gospel is proclaimed, people believe, disciples are made, and then churches are formed. When you put your faith in Jesus, you don't just get God as your Father, but you are now put in relationship with other Christians who are your brothers and sisters in Christ. You are now a part of the larger global Church, lived out in small local expressions, such as Citizens Church Charlotte.

This is why membership is so important. It's you committing to play your role in the larger family of God through a particular local congregation.

Our Membership Class is the first step towards membership at Citizens Church. If you're interested in becoming a member at Citizens, or just interested in finding out more about who we are, join us Sunday, September 17th from 4pm-6:30pm.

Coffee + light refreshments are provided. Childcare is also provided, but please register in advance.

### [\*\*MORE INFO + REGISTRATION\*\*](#)

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## **Family Vacation**

*November 10-12, Black Mountain, NC*

Registration for this year's Family Vacation is now open! We value the chance to get away, retreat, rest, and spend time together as a church family, and we'd love for you to join us this year! On November 10-12, we are heading to the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, NC. We will be staying in two cabins on the property, and will have a main meeting area for family style meals and sessions.

Family vacation is open to all Citizens Church members, members-in-progress (have taken membership class), and children of current members. The cost of the trip is \$100/adult and \$25/child. Scholarships are available if needed, but please talk to Dan about that sooner rather than later.

If you're planning to attend, please register ASAP. The earlier you register, the easier it is for us to plan for the weekend. You can register and get more details by clicking the graphic below.

### [\*\*MORE INFO + REGISTRATION\*\*](#)

## SERIES RECAP

For the past 1,800 years, millions upon millions of Christians worldwide have recited the Apostle's Creed as part of their corporate worship. Written shortly after the death of Christ, the Apostles' Creed summarizes foundational Christian beliefs. It is a helpful statement which unites the church, instructs the believer, protects against false doctrine, and points to a glorious God and what He desires for His people. Over the course of this series, we will explore the ancient creed together seeking to deepen ourselves in our ancient historic faith and, more importantly, in the God of our faith.

**Let us read the Apostles Creed together to start the evening.**

***"I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."***

## PRAYER + SCRIPTURE

**Open with a brief word of prayer:** "God, we thank you for this time together. We open our hearts to how you might want to meet with us. Allow us to hear your voice and experience your work among us. Come Holy Spirit."

**1-2 minutes of silent reflection.**

**Read Matthew 25:31-46:**

*31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' 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.'*

*41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' 45 Then he will answer them, saying,*

*'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*

**1-2 minutes of silent reflection.**

**Close with this short prayer:** "Jesus, we believe that you will come again to judge the living and the dead. Holy Spirit, we ask that you help us see rightly God's judgment, holiness, justice. Let it spur us on to a deeper appreciation for the cross, and a heart for sharing with others the good news of Jesus. Amen.

**As you reflect on Matthew 25:31-46 what is the Holy Spirit showing or teaching you?**

## **SERMON DISCUSSION**

*Let's have a discussion around these main points from Sunday's teaching:*

### **SHEEP & GOATS**

*This week, we are looking at the line from the Creed - "From there Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead." This is a particularly difficult line for us to believe, especially as modern Westerners, but this line is also distinctly Biblical. The return and judgment of Christ appears over 300x in the New Testament. Jesus Himself talks about it explicitly in Matthew 25.*

**How have you wrestled with the truth of Christ's return and judgment in the past?**

### **THREE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

*In the sermon, we posed three questions for us to consider as we wrestle with believing and accepting this doctrine. They were:*

- 1. Is God loving if He doesn't judge? Meaning is God truly loving if He takes a passive approach toward the evils of history.*
- 2. Do you really want God to be fair? Meaning Hell is the place for those who have chosen to reject Jesus and his authority. It is a completely fair and logical consequence for those who have spent their lives rejecting Him.*
- 3. How holy do you think God is? Who or what an offense is against, their worth and value, dictates the severity of the punishment. If that is true, then how severe must the punishment be for sin against our awesome God.*

**How do you receive these three questions as you process through Christ's return and judgment?**

### **HOW DO WE RESPOND?**

*This line in the creed does not have to stay as one of fear and dread. For those who trust in Jesus, it is a declaration of victory and a prayer of longing for the day Christ will return to right all wrongs and make all things new.*

*For those who do not yet trust in Jesus, the invitation is to repent and put their faith in Him. For those who do trust in Jesus, the invitation is to let Christ's judgment spur us on towards sharing the gospel both near (neighborhoods, workplaces, friendships) and far (the nations).*

**What is the Holy Spirit stirring in your heart for how you should respond to God's Word this week?**

## **SERIES PRACTICE**

One of our key discipleship values as a church is that of practice. Moving forward, we are going to begin emphasizing one of our key spiritual practices during each sermon series. This practice is meant to coincide with the theme of the series, and something we invite our church to practice as a part of their spiritual formation.

During the Apostles Creed series, we are emphasizing the practice of Scripture. Getting into God's Word and getting God's Word into us is vital for helping form our doctrine and fuel our discipleship.

Spend some time before you close talking about what group members are reading, and how you can press into Scripture as a group this summer.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Pray over what was shared in the discussion, for your group to be united in the gospel, and for help from the Holy Spirit to be shaped to be more like Jesus as we put God's ways into practice.