

Judgment Day

BIBLE BASICS

Inside the Courtroom: A Story of Judgment

When the veil of this life was lifted, I found myself overwhelmed by the weight of truth. There was no darkness hiding anything now, only clarity, only reality. My heart trembled, not because God was cruel, but because I realized I could no longer pretend.

The doors creaked open slowly, and a voice echoed from within: "Come inside." My heart pounded. I rose on unsteady legs, walking into the room as though I were stepping into my doom. I saw two figures standing on either side of the courtroom. To my right, the prosecutor loomed, his eyes burning with hatred, lips twisted into a cruel sneer. His presence was suffocating, the weight of evil emanating from him like a black fog. I could feel the heat of his malice even from across the room.

I knew though did not need to invent lies. He pointed to my sins, my negligence, my pride, my hypocrisy, my half-hearted repentance, my wasted time. Each memory pierced me, because it was mine.

I stood before the Judgment, not as a spectator of a drama, but as a soul exposed.

And I understood something terrible: the accusations were not entirely false. I was not innocent.

To my left, my lawyer stood silent, serene. His face was kind but shrouded in mystery. Though He radiated a peaceful aura, I was gripped with fear. Could He possibly defend me? Was He truly strong enough to stand against the accusations that I knew were coming?

The Judge sat down, His face solemn, His eyes piercing. "Let us begin," He commanded, His voice ringing with authority.

Satan, the accuser began, The words poured from him like venom, recounting every dark moment of my life. He spoke of the lies I had told, the anger I had let fester, the times I had hurt those I loved, the moments of cowardice when I had turned away from doing what was right. Each sin was like a knife plunging deeper into my soul. Satan's voice grew louder, more vicious, as he recalled my betrayals, my failures, and the times I had abandoned my faith.

I tried to hold my composure, but with each accusation, I sank lower in my seat. My breath grew shallow, my chest tightened. Sweat trickled down my back. How could I have forgotten so much? So many sins—things I thought I had buried, long gone, but here they were, paraded before the Judge in horrifying detail. And yet, through all this, my lawyer said nothing. He stood silent, His face impassive. Fear gnawed at me. Was He abandoning me?

Then I saw Him.

Christ stood there not as a powerless defender, but as the Lord. And in that moment I realized the mystery: **the One who would judge me was also the One who had pursued me all my life with mercy.**

His wounds were visible, not as shame, but as victory. The marks of love were still present.

The Accuser spoke loudly. Christ spoke quietly.

And Christ did not deny justice. He did not call sin “small.” He did not excuse rebellion.

Jesus, turned His gaze toward me, His eyes filled with compassion, “this man is not to be judged by his sins alone. He has also walked in faith, though faltering, and he has turned to Me in repentance. He was baptized into My death and resurrection, cleansed by the waters of life. He has partaken in the sacraments of the Church, in My body and blood, and through them, I have been with him.”

Then I understood the true terror: not that God judges, but that I might refuse His mercy.

And I also understood the true hope: that **the Judge is the Savior**, and that the Savior does not crush the repentant.

And Christ, who judges in righteousness, received the repentant in mercy.

Note: This story is not meant to define the mechanics of the judgment as a literal human courtroom. It is a pastoral image to awaken repentance and hope, always within the Church’s faith that Christ is both Judge and Savior.

Who Is the Judge? Who Is Our Advocate?

This question is not a technical detail—it is spiritually decisive. Many people fear judgment because they imagine a distant courtroom where God is only angry. But the Gospel reveals something far deeper: **the Judge is the One who loved us, died for us, and rose for us.**

Christ Himself teaches:

“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,”
(*John 5:22, NKJV*)

So **Christ is the Judge**. And yet the Church also confesses that **Christ intercedes for us**, and that in Him we have mercy as well as justice. This is not a contradiction. It is the mystery of the Savior: the One who judges is the One who saves.

That is why your line is spiritually powerful and worth keeping:

Christ is both our Judge and Advocate.

What better way to make sure to enter heaven than having your Judge as Advocate!

We must hold this Orthodox balance:

- We do not erase judgment.
- We do not despair under judgment.
- We prepare through repentance, faith, and the sacramental life of the Church.

Christ is Coming!

The Orthodox Creed teaches us plainly: **Christ is coming again**—not symbolically, not only spiritually, but truly and openly:

“He is coming on the last day to judge the living and the dead.”
(*Orthodox Creed*)

This expectation is not meant to produce panic, but **sobriety, repentance, and hope**. The Second Coming is the final unveiling of what the Resurrection already declared: Christ is Lord of life and death, and history is moving toward His righteous judgment and His eternal Kingdom.

“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.”
(*Revelation 1:7, NKJV*)

“so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”
(*Hebrews 9:28, NKJV*)

At the Ascension, the angelic message confirmed that Christ’s departure was not abandonment, but a promise:

“And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.””
(*Acts 1:10–11, NKJV*)

And the apostolic preaching declares that God has appointed a definite Day of judgment:

“because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”
(*Acts 17:31, NKJV*)

Signs Preceding the Last Day

The Lord did not give signs so that we become obsessed with timelines. He gave signs so that we remain **watchful, sober, and faithful**, and so we do not fall into deception.

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,”

“who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:3–4, NKJV)

“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.”

(Matthew 24:9, NKJV)

“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

(Matthew 24:14, NKJV)

“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”

(Matthew 24:24, NKJV)

Notice how these signs are both external and internal:

- persecution outside,
- deception outside,
- and falling away within.

So the safest preparation is not speculation, but **faithfulness**: repentance, sacramental life, endurance in truth, and discernment.

God Desires the Salvation of All

Before speaking further about judgment, the Church must proclaim clearly **the heart of God**. Judgment is real, but it is not God’s desire that any should perish. The Judge Himself reveals His will openly in Scripture.

“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but should raise it up at the last day.

And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

(John 6:39–40, NKJV)

The Second Coming is therefore not only a day of reckoning, but also a day of **fulfillment**—the completion of salvation for those who have remained in Christ.

At the same time, Scripture reminds us that the nearness of Christ’s coming calls for vigilance:

“Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”

(Revelation 3:11, NKJV)

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

(Revelation 22:12, NKJV)

God’s desire to save does not eliminate human responsibility. Salvation is offered freely, but it must be received faithfully. The same coming of Christ that is joy for the faithful becomes sorrow for those who rejected Him.

The Universal Judgment: Separation and Revelation

The Judgment Day is universal—no one is excluded, forgotten, or overlooked. Christ Himself describes it with clarity and solemnity:

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.”

(Matthew 25:31–33, NKJV)

This judgment is not arbitrary. It is a **revelation of what each person has chosen** through their life—communion with God or separation from Him.

Scripture emphasizes that judgment involves full disclosure:

“For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

(Ecclesiastes 12:14, NKJV)

These are not meant to terrify into despair, but to awaken sobriety, humility, and repentance.

- **We will all appear:** the weak Christian and the strong one. No one escapes. There is no imagined preference based on outward piety alone.
- **God’s authority is absolute:** He will make no mistake. He will examine not only actions, but motives.
- **Everything will be revealed:** nothing hidden remains hidden.
- **The judgment is final:** there is no appeal, because it is based on God’s perfect knowledge and justice.

The terror of judgment does not come from injustice, but from truth. Judgment reveals reality as it is. For the repentant, this revelation becomes healing. For the unrepentant, it becomes exposure.

“Judge Not”: Escaping Condemnation by Repentance

The Lord teaches us that how we live now directly shapes how we will stand before Him then.

“Judge not, that you be not judged.

For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”

(Matthew 7:1–2, NKJV)

Saint Paul echoes this warning:

“But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”

(Romans 14:10, NKJV)

And he also gives us the remedy:

“For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.”

(1 Corinthians 11:31, NKJV)

Self-examination, confession, and repentance are not signs of weakness—they are preparation for judgment. The person who judges himself honestly before God now will not fear standing before Him later.

Scripture assures us:

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

(1 John 1:9, NKJV)

“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”

(1 John 2:2, NKJV)

“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

(John 20:23, NKJV)

For sin to be forgiven, it must be **forsaken**. Repentance is not merely regret, but turning away from sin and returning to God.

Fear of Judgment and the Fear of the Lord

The Church does not deny fear—but she **purifies** it.

The Compline prayer expresses the sober fear that awakens repentance:

“Behold, I am about to stand before the just judge in fear because of my numerous sins, for the life spent in pleasures deserves condemnation.

Repent therefore, O my soul so long as you dwell on earth, for the dust in the grave offers no praise...

Rise up from your laziness and implore the Savior in repentance, saying; Lord have mercy upon me and save me.”

(Compline Litany)

At the same time, Scripture teaches that fear is not the final state of the believer:

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect

The Church therefore teaches us to distinguish between **sinful fear** and **holy fear**.

- **Sinful fear** paralyzes, produces despair, and pushes the soul away from God.
- **Holy fear (the fear of the Lord)** awakens repentance, humility, watchfulness, and obedience.

This is why Scripture never abolishes fear entirely, but **transforms it**:

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

(Proverbs 9:10, NKJV)

Fear at the beginning of spiritual life restrains sin and awakens conscience. As the soul grows in love, fear is purified and becomes reverence. The mature Christian does not live in terror of judgment, but in **reverent readiness**, careful not to grieve the One he loves.

Yet even the mature Christian remains sober:

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

(Revelation 22:12, NKJV)

The Testing Fire and the Revelation of Works

Scripture teaches that on the Day of Judgment, works will not only be counted, but **tested**.

“each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.”

(1 Corinthians 3:13, NKJV)

This fire is not arbitrary punishment. It is the **revealing presence of God**. The same divine presence that is light and warmth for the righteous becomes burning exposure for what is false, selfish, or empty.

What is built on love, obedience, humility, and truth remains.
What is built on pride, hypocrisy, and self-glory is consumed.
The fire does not change the work—it reveals what it truly is.

This is why the Christian life is not about appearances, but about **inner truth**.

The State of the Soul After Death

What is the state of a person after death? Is he in Heaven or hell immediately? If judgment is in the future, why do we pray for the departed? Is there redemption after death?

After death, a person enters an **intermediate state**—either **Paradise** or **Hades**—where the soul awaits the final Judgment at the Second Coming of Christ.

This intermediate state is **not** the final destiny.

- Paradise is a place of comfort, peace, and joy for those who “die in the Lord.”
- Hades is a place of conscious torment for those who rejected God.

The final and complete judgment occurs only at the Second Coming:

“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

(John 5:28–29, NKJV)

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory...”

(Matthew 25:31–46, NKJV)

Why There Is No Second Chance After Death

The Church teaches clearly that **there is no repentance after death**. Earthly life is the time given for repentance, faith, and transformation.

Those who die in Christ are already blessed:

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”

(Revelation 14:13, NKJV)

“having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.”

(Philippians 1:23, NKJV)

“Let not your heart be troubled... I go to prepare a place for you.”
(*John 14:1–3, NKJV*)

But those who willfully rejected salvation in this life have no second opportunity after death.

This is illustrated clearly in the parable:

The Rich Man and Lazarus
(*Luke 16:19–31, NKJV*)

The rich man is conscious, aware, and in torment. His condition cannot be reversed. On the Day of Judgment, Hades itself will surrender the dead:

“Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.”
(*Revelation 20:13–14, NKJV*)

Pastoral Analogy: Waiting for Judgment

Analogy 1: The Prisoner Awaiting Trial

A soul in Hades is like someone arrested and imprisoned without bail, fully conscious of guilt, awaiting the final verdict. The torment is not only punishment—it is anticipation of what is coming.

Analogy 2: The Student Awaiting Results

The soul in Paradise is like a student who studied well and now waits peacefully for results, confident in the coming reward.

Both are waiting.

But one waits in fear, the other in peace.

The difference was not decided after death—but during life.

Redemption: What It Is and Why We Must Be Ready

Redemption means **to buy back, to pay a ransom.**

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us.”
(*Galatians 3:13, NKJV*)

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”
(*Ephesians 1:7, NKJV*)

“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things... but with the precious blood of Christ.”

(1 Peter 1:18–19, NKJV)

Redemption was accomplished fully on the Cross. It is offered to all—but effective only for those who accept it through faith, repentance, and a holy life.

If a person does not lead a holy life and death comes, there is no turning back.
Therefore, **we must always be ready.**

Choosing Life Now

God places the decision before us clearly:

“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.”

(Deuteronomy 30:19, NKJV)

The Judgment Day is not meant to terrify us into despair, but to awaken us into **repentance, vigilance, humility, and hope.**

Christ is coming.

Christ is Judge.

Christ is Savior.

And because **our Judge is our Advocate**, the safest place to stand on that Day is **in Him**, through repentance, faith, and life in His Church.



Review Questions

1. **What does the Orthodox Creed teach about the Second Coming of Christ?**
That Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead.
2. **Who will judge the world on the Last Day?**
The Lord Jesus Christ.
3. **How can Christ be both Judge and Advocate?**
Because He judges in righteousness and intercedes for those who repent and belong to Him.
4. **What is God's will regarding the salvation of humanity?**
That everyone who believes in Christ may have eternal life.
5. **What will happen to the dead and the living at the Second Coming?**

The dead will be raised, and the living will be changed.

6. **What is the difference between Paradise and Hades?**

Paradise is a place of comfort and joy for the righteous, and Hades is a place of conscious torment for the wicked, both awaiting final judgment.

7. **Is there repentance or salvation after death?**

No, repentance is only possible during earthly life.

8. **What does it mean that a person's work will be tested by fire?**

God will reveal the true nature and motive of every person's deeds.

9. **What kind of fear should a Christian have toward the Judgment Day?**

Reverent fear that leads to repentance, not despair.

10. **How can a Christian be ready for the Judgment Day?**

By repentance, faith in Christ, and living a holy life within the Church.