

The Final Judgment

Homily for March 30 ,2022

Today's Gospel is one of the Lord's most comprehensive teachings Jesus' authority to be the final judge.

The Bible teaches that there are two judgments. The first judgment will happen at our death and is called the particular judgment. This is the moment when each of us will give an account to Jesus for how we lived in the body and will be specific to each one of us. There is also the final and universal judgment that will occur at the time of the Second Coming, when all of history will be presented before every person who has ever lived. At that time we will see and understand how our lives were used as instruments of good and holiness or as instruments of evil and destructiveness in the unfolding of history.

It is this universal judgment of which Jesus is speaking when he says:

Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; ²⁷ and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.¹

Notice what Jesus is saying here. By using the words "Very truly, I tell you" Jesus is emphasizing that he is revealing to us something we cannot deduce on our own. That at the ultimate moment all of those who are dead will hear the voice of Jesus and will live. But you may be asking: "Are not the dead already alive? Yes they are. The dead have a soul that is immortal and is in the process of being perfected and has already been perfected. Or sadly it has been separated from God in hell. But here Jesus is talking about what will happen at the Second Coming.

What Jesus teaching us here is that he is the one who sustains all life, and apart from him we could not have life in the present. And apart from him we could not share in the fullness of eternal life which we will know when our souls are joined to an immortal body.

But here is the sobering truth, although Jesus wants all to share in the glorious Resurrection there are those who because of how they lived in this life will be judged for how they influenced history for ill and so we hear these very definitive words:

²⁸ Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

¹ [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#) (Jn 5:25–29). (1989). Thomas Nelson Publishers.

There will be two Resurrections, the resurrection of life and the resurrection of condemnation. In saying these words Jesus is reiterating a theme found in the Book of Daniel chapter 12:

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.²

The Catechism teaches:

“Christ is Lord of eternal life. Full right to pass definitive judgment on the works and hearts of men belongs to him as Redeemer of the world. He ‘acquired’ this right by his cross”

(CCC 679).

It was precisely by his obedience to the cross that he received the right to be our judge. Jesus also has been given authority over life itself. God is the author of all human life. “Author” is the root word of “authority.” The one who creates a story is the one who owns it; he or she is the author. God is our author; ergo, he holds ultimate authority over us. In fact, God the Father shares all his authority over creation with the Son.

Because he is the Author Jesus can also assure us:

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.³

As we grow in both hearing and believing the words of Jesus his grace will be at work in us now so that we will grow in doing good. Because we want to share now in the life in Christ in these bodies, so we will fully share in his life in the Resurrected Body.

Let us give thanks to Jesus that he gives us physical life and so shapes our moral life so that by his grace we will share in the resurrection life in the New Heaven and New Earth.

² [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#) (Da 12:2). (1989). Thomas Nelson Publishers.

³ [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#) (Jn 5:24). (1989). Thomas Nelson Publishers.