

We bow our hearts in prayer: O Christ, Son of the Living God and judge of the world, give us Your peace which the world cannot give as we consider Your sure and certain Word regarding Judgement Day. May we not fear it, but look forward to Your glorious return. Amen.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Dear fellow redeemed, last week we considered the end times, what signs we are to expect that remind us that Jesus *is coming again to judge both the living and the dead.*

This week, our attention turns to that final day of Judgment, when Jesus will come in all His glory.

This day will not come after a tell-tale literal thousand year period as some suppose, but it will come **in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.** <sup>1Corinthians15:52</sup>

It will come like judgment came in Noah's day, **w/people eating, drinking & giving in marriage.**

It will come like the fire and brimstone that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah. <sup>Matthew24:38</sup>

It will come like a thief in the night. Suddenly and completely.

This sounds pretty scary, doesn't it?

Even the name of the day, "Judgment Day," doesn't sound friendly.

But what does Jesus say to His people? Does He say, "Be scared; be afraid"?

No, instead He says, "**Look up and lift up your heads, your redemption draws near.**" <sup>Luke21:28 NKJV</sup>

And there is good reason for Him to say this to you,

because you have already heard your judgment, already even this morning.

When you confessed your sins and your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior,

you heard Him speak to you through His minister, "Your sins are forgiven."

You are not guilty and therefore need not fear Judgment Day.

Nor do you need to fear death for as we will hear in our text,

**all His enemies will be under His feet, and the last enemy to be destroyed is death,**

as will be witnessed by the resurrection to life on that Judgment Day.

... We read as follows in Jesus' name:

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "*God has put all things in subjection under His feet.*" But when it says, "*all things are put in subjection,*" it is plain that He is excepted who put all things in subjection under Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him who put all things in subjection under Him, that God may be all in all. <sup>(ESV)</sup>

*This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen.* <sup>(John 17:17)</sup>

We confessed just moments ago that Jesus is *sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.*

That seat, at the right hand of God, is not a location where Jesus physically sits, but a position.

It means that Jesus, as true Man and true God is ruling over all things in this world,

over the visible things, like man and nature,

as well as over the invisible, like the good angels and the evil demons.

Our text confirms this when it says that God the Father **subjected all things under Him.**

When Jesus walked this earth, **He humbled Himself and took the form of a servant.**

He became obedient to His parents and the spiritual authorities, the Chief Priests/the Sanhedrin.

He also obeyed the secular authorities, like the Roman governor Pontius Pilate.

He even *obeyed, loved & esteemed* these sinful earthy rulers when their judgments were corrupt.

But of course, this was only natural for someone who gave Himself 100% into subjection to the Word of God which requires obedience to the lawful authorities in the 4<sup>th</sup> Command.

That submission, that obedience took Him to the cross to suffer and die for the sins of all men.

After His death, He was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, but only for 3 days as the ancient world counted them.

On that 3<sup>rd</sup> day, what we celebrate as Easter Sunday morning, Jesus rose from the dead.

You see, death did not defeat Jesus. Death did not take Jesus' life; He gave it up.

And after He had finished, completed all the work of your redemption, He rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

His body did not see corruption, nor did death have any power to keep Him dead.

Of His own power and will, Jesus' body came back to life as His spirit reunited with it.

This resurrection was what our text was speaking about when it calls **Christ the firstfruits.**

He was the first to rise from the dead, never to die again.

All the others that Jesus and His ministers rose from the dead, all eventually died again, but Jesus rose with His glorified body, no longer in humility and subjection.

Now, **all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him.** Matthew 28:18

Now, *He lives... and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.*

...

Now where there is a firstfruit, by necessity there needs to be more to follow behind it.

And this is where you come in. **For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.**

St. Paul is clearly speaking specifically about Christians here as those **made alive.**

We see that in the greater context but also in the next sentence when He confirms the order:

**Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ.**

This will indeed be a joyful day, but only **for those who belong to Christ.**

In our Gospel lesson we heard how that day will be.

Christ will come suddenly in His glory with His angels in the clouds on His glorious throne.

He will judge justly and easily divide those who are His

and those who would not receive His forgiveness and righteousness.

For those who would not receive Jesus or His forgiveness and righteousness, this will be a fearful and hopeless day.

They will cry out in vain that they would have fed, clothed, visited, and quenched His thirst, if only they had known it was Him.

They will give one last ditch effort to attempt to pacify God's wrath by their own efforts, rather than relying on Christ's righteousness for them.

But Jesus, their judge will have no time for such excuses.

He will command them to depart from Him into the eternal fire and punishment, **prepared, not for them, but for the devil and his evil angels.** Matthew 25

They will finally see what a horrible thing it is to reject God's grace and goodness in Christ,

because that torment is not one that comes and goes like many of our ailments now. Here on earth, we often find at least a little reprieve from pain ebbing and flowing, <sup>Mark9:48</sup> but there, Jesus describes it as where **the worm never dies and the flame is never quenched.**

We also hear that on this day, all His enemies will be destroyed and completely subjected to Him. This does not mean that He does not have full control over them now; He does.

But He is **patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish,**

**but that all should reach repentance**<sup>2Peter3:9</sup> as St. Peter tells us in his second letter.

His desire is that all sinners would repent, turn to Him and receive His forgiveness/righteousness.

But on that day, His patience will end and He will take all powers away from His enemies.

The devil and his demons will be powerless to tempt any away from God,

since faith will be replaced by sight, and unbelief be replaced by absolute knowledge.

Even our human nature will no longer be able to assert a sinful will,

as **every knee shall bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.** <sup>Philippians2:10-11</sup>

This will be true both of those who already have confessed this in this life,

as well as of those who refuse to acknowledge it.

But on that day, we will see the final victory as **the last enemy to be destroyed is death.**

On that day, as all the dead, both believers and unbelievers, are raised up,

we will see the corruption of sin fall apart.

What Jesus began at His resurrection will be fully realized among all people.

Those who did not believe will rise also, physical death has not destroyed them, nor will it, for all whom Christ died will rise.

But they will rise (body and soul) to face eternal punishment and shame,

eternally separated from all grace and mercy which they rejected in this life.

Believers who've died will rise to life again, their souls reunited with their now-glorified bodies.

Believers who are still living, their bodies will simply change to glorious bodies,

never to see death as Enoch and Elijah both experienced; corruptible changed to incorruptible.

Believers will never know pain, or illness, or derision, or depression, or doubt, or death anymore.

They will suffer no more temptations, or guilt, or shame.

They will hear their Savior invite them to inherit His kingdom of glory for all eternity.

This means that as a child of God through Baptism, you do not need to fear death.

Nor do you need to fear Judgment Day.

For those who **have been baptized into Christ, have been baptized into His death.** <sup>Romans6:3</sup>

You have received the full benefit of His suffering for your sins.

And you who have been **united with Him in a death like His** (as you were in Baptism),

you **shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His,** as St. Paul tells us. <sup>Romans6:5</sup>

In fact, you can mock Death along with St. Paul and look forward to Judgment Day, saying

**"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"** <sup>1Corinthians15:55</sup>

... **The sting of death is sin,** but Christ has taken all your sin upon Himself.

He has cleansed your soul in the waters of Baptism

and has given you a new life, His life, of *righteousness, innocence and blessedness* for all eternity.

... **Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** <sup>1Corinthians15:57</sup>

*Soli Deo Gloria*