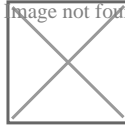


“The First Time He Came to Save the World; the Second He will Come to Judge it.” (Meat-Fare Sunday) - 1 († Dionysios, Metropolitan of Servia and Kozani)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)

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Nothing else in life is so certain as that we shall die. The fact that we were born and are in this world leads to the certainty that one day we will be leaving it. Every day we see and understand that people are born and that they die; some come, others go. But there's another certainty: that we'll be judged, in other words that we'll give an account of the way we've led this life. This is a belief common to all, deeply-rooted in people of all nations and throughout all time. But we have “the prophetic word more certainly”; our Scriptures write about the great and manifest day of the judgement and Christ Jesus talks of His second coming, as we hear in the Gospel at the Divine Liturgy today.



Christ's second coming and the judgment are an act of God which validates the teaching of the Gospel, the faith of the Church and the life of the faithful. Saint John Chrysostom calls this a "most sweet" Gospel reading, which the faithful receive from the mouth of Christ, study with care and retain in their memory with compunction. The Church seals the Creed with the expectation of the resurrection and judgement. Our own consciences and the words of Christ in the reading are sufficient to convince us, but Saint Paul is just as clear in his *Epistle to the Hebrews* : "And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment" (9, 27).

And yet there are a lot of people who never get round to thinking either that they'll die or that they'll be judged by God for their actions. It's the worst thing that can happen to people. Take the *memento mori* out of your mind, and the fear of judgement, and you let yourself sink to the level of animals and there's nothing to hold you back. Particularly when you're young. It's as if young people don't see so many old folk around them, as if they don't see people dying every day. They're fooled by their youth and their health and think they'll always be young and that they'll never have to give an account of the way they live. And yet the remembrance of death is the most beneficial thing of all for us, whether we're young or have grown old. The whole of life, for people who have any sense and for the saints of God, is the remembrance of death. It's bitter, but it's good for our salvation for each one of us to remember that we'll die. If you don't forget death, you'll remember that the judgement awaits, as does God's retribution*.

Jesus Christ spoke clearly about His second and glorious second coming. The first time, He came humbly and in poverty; the second time, He'll arrive in all His divine glory. The first time, He came to save the world; the second time, He'll come to judge it. The first time, He gave the commandment of love; the second time, He'll judge in righteousness. Not only as God, however, nor as Man, but as God/Man: as God, Who is entirely just, and as Man, Who understands human weakness.

[To Be Continued]