

PART SEVEN

ESCHATOLOGY

OR

THE PERFECTION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE MIDDLE CONDITION

CHAPTER ONE

PARTIAL JUDGMENT

Physical death followed as the natural result of sin **that first** brought spiritual death. Death became a universal phenomenon and a common cup offered to all mankind, even to those who were justified through Christ, although they became free **of** spiritual death. Although the soul is separated from the body, as Holy Scripture **teaches**, it remains alive and in **complete** self-consciousness of its existence. According to the life one lived on earth, either in Virtue or in sinful passions, **one's** soul, after physical death, is placed **in a condition according** to its spiritual nature. In this middle condition each soul remains from the moment of its separation from this life **until** the Second Coming of Christ and the final Judgement of all. This period is known as the Partial Judgement, according to which the soul **has a foretaste** either **of** the good things of Paradise or **it** suffers torment in the darkness of Hades.¹ As we can conclude, the Partial Judgement of each soul **that** takes place immediately after its departure from its body, as well as the **foretaste** of joy or pain, is distinguished from the Final and Universal Judgement, which will take place at the Second Coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, after which the perfection of the **Blessedness and Glory** of the **Just** and the condemnation of the sinners into the **Eternal Fire** will follow.²

1. The Meaning of Death According to Holy Scripture

Death according to Holy Scripture has three meanings:³

1. Physical or natural death is the end of this present life, which **occurs through** the separation of the soul from the body.
2. Spiritual or moral death, which **occurs** through the separation from God, **caused by mortal sins, and finally**
3. Eternal death, which is the eternal separation of man from God and his condemnation into the endless punishment.

The last form of death is **referred to** by Holy Scripture as *“the second death, the lake of fire.”*⁴

The physical or natural death **came into existence** after the **O**ffence of Adam - a natural, necessary and universal phenomenon. All men became mortal. No one can escape death, besides the two **P**rophets Enoch⁵ and Elijah⁶ who ascended alive into

¹ Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Confession*, ch. 18, pp. 95-96.

² Cf. Kefalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 64-66. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 223-224. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 92.

³ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 92, 336.

⁴ Rev. 20:14.

⁵ Gen. 5:24.

⁶ 2 Kings (4 Kings):2:11.

Heaven and **who** will taste death only when they will face the Anti-Christ before the glorious Second Coming of the Lord. **In** addition, St Paul assures **us** that “*we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with Lord.*”⁷ “*Behold, I tell you a Mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and **for** this mortal must put on immortality.*”⁸

2. The **Immortality of the Soul and the After Death Existence**

The body is dissolved as a material synthesis when separated from the soul that continues to exist, having an eternal nature.⁹ This Truth is based not only upon Theological arguments but also on philosophical **proof that does** not have absolute authority. **This proof is** as follows:

1. The faith and hope of all nations that man continues to live after death (historical proof)
2. The tendency of man for the absolute and infinite **joy of** the human soul **that** struggles **in vain** to achieve in this life **that** which can be realised in some other life (eschatological proof)
3. From the nature of the soul as **being** simple and not subject to dissolution **after physical death** (ontological proof)
4. From the idea of justice **that** appears **to be violated** in this world **as well as** not being rewarded **due to** virtue **being** persecuted and injustice prevailing. Since we accept that God is Good and Just **providing** all things for the world, it is necessary to accept that He has **just** rewards **in store** for each man in another world (moral proof).

The fact that the soul exists after death, preserving **its** full conscience and having **an** interest **in** those who continue to live in this life, as well as **in** the things **that** occur in this life, is witnessed not only in the Parable of the Rich Man and Poor Lazarus¹⁰ but **also** in other parts of Holy Scripture.¹¹ In the Book of Revelation, the souls of those who were slaughtered unjustly appear under the **Holy Altar** of Heaven, crying out to the Lord and saying: “*How long, O Lord, Holy and True, until Thou judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?*”¹² Also the twenty-four **Presbyters** who represent the members of the Triumphant Church, **being fully**

⁷ 1 Thess. 4:17.

⁸ 1 Corinth. 15:51-53.

⁹ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 347-348.

¹⁰ Luke 16:19-31.

¹¹ 1 Peter 3:19. John

¹² Rev. 6:9-11.

conscious, offer worship to the Living God and place their crowns before His Throne.¹³ Finally, the two Prophets, Moses and Elijah, representing the dead and the living respectively, appeared at the Transfiguration of our Lord.¹⁴ Furthermore, Christ assured us that “Abraham rejoiced to see His Day, and he saw it and was glad.”¹⁵

Hence those who support the opinion that the soul falls into the sleep of death until the General Resurrection and Day of Judgement, and when the *Psychopannychia* have been condemned, are mistaken,¹⁶ although it is true that in many verses of Holy Scripture the terms “sleep” and “fallen asleep” are used to signify death.¹⁷ However these terms are used in relation to the body only, signifying the temporary rest in the tomb until, at the sound of the Trumpet of the Angel, all shall be Resurrected.

3. Repentance and Struggle for Virtue Only in this World

Death is not the end of the life of the soul, nor does it weaken its self-conscience or the other attributes and spiritual functions. Instead it marks the end of all efforts of repentance and correction of errors committed in this life. The time of struggle for changing our ways of life and the achievement of virtues and deeds of Holiness is only during this lifetime and when it ends through death, the reward of the soul in its current moral condition in which death has found her, begins permanently and Eternally. Proof of this is obtained from the Parable of the Rich Man and Poor Lazaros¹⁸ as well as from many other words of our Lord, in addition to those recorded in the Epistles of the New Testament. Accordingly, the Rich Man and poor Lazaros were found by death to be in different spiritual conditions that separated them from each other by a great Chasm and although the Rich Man showed signs of repentance, his condition remained fruitless and no change or the smallest comfort could be offered to him.

According to the Parable of the Ten Virgins¹⁹ in which the five foolish Virgins showed awareness at the last moment, they remained excluded from the Wedding Festival. In conjunction with the instruction of the Lord to “be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect,”²⁰ the same Truth is implied. Besides this, the Lord instructs us to “strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the House has risen up and shuts the door, you will begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open for us, and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from.’”²¹ The combination of these two Teachings makes it clear that only in this life is the struggle for achieving virtue possible because if one has not prepared during this period, then one is excluded after death from the Kingdom of

¹³ Rev. 4:10; 5:8, 14.

¹⁴ Matth. 17:1-13. Mark 9:2-13. Luke 9:28-36.

¹⁵ John 8:56.

¹⁶ Origen, *To John*, v. XX, in *B*, v. 13, p. 254.

¹⁷ John 11:11. Acts 7:60; 13:36. 1 Corinth. 11:30; 15:6, 51. 2 Peter 3:4. Matth. 27:52. 1 Corinth. 15:18, 20. 1 Thess. 4:13-15.

¹⁸ Luke 16:19-31.

¹⁹ Matth. 25:1-13.

²⁰ Matth. 24:44.

²¹ Luke 13:24-25.

Heaven. St Paul also urged us: “Behold, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of Salvation.”²² “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do well to all, especially to those who are of the Household of Faith.”²³

St Clement in his 2nd Letter to the Corinthians stated that “while we are yet on earth, let us repent. For we are clay in the Craftsman’s hand. For example: if while a potter is making a vessel, it becomes misshapen or breaks in his hands, he simply reshapes it; but if he has already put it into the kiln, he is no longer able to repair it. So it is with us: as long as we are in this world, let us repent with our whole heart of the evil things which we have done in the flesh, in order that we may be saved by the Lord while we still have time for repentance. For after we have departed from the world, we are no longer able there either to confess or to repent anymore. So, brothers, if we have done the Will of the Father and have kept the flesh pure and have observed the Commandments of the Lord, we will receive Eternal Life. For the Lord says in the Gospel: ‘If you did not guard something small, who will give you something great? For I say to you, whoever is faithful with very little is also faithful with much.’²⁴ Now what he means is this: keep the flesh pure and the Seal unstained, in order that we may receive Life.”²⁵ “While we still have time to be healed, let us place ourselves in the Hands of God the Physician.”²⁶

St Cyril of Jerusalem declared that the Scriptures state: “...that the dead do not praise *Thee*, O Lord,’ this means, that the time for repentance and forgiveness are only during this life, and that those who have departed with sins cannot praise the Lord, but will be punished.”²⁷

St Basil the Great proclaimed: “...the time for repentance and forgiveness of sins is this period... in the future century the just Judgement and the Reward...” and that “...after the departure from here there is no time for achievements, for God counted this time to work what *is* pleasing to Him.”²⁸

St Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzos also cautioned us that “in Hades there is no confession and correction for those who depart *to* there. For God has included here life and action, there the examination of the deeds.”²⁹

St John Chrysostom observed that “the period of life is the time to live accordingly, after the *End Judgement and torment...*”³⁰ and consequently, while “we are still in this life, it is *possible* to avoid the punishment by changing...” because *once* “... we depart there we will cry.”³¹ Elsewhere, interpreting the Parable of the Rich Man and Poor Lazaros, he noted that “...as long as we are here, we have good hope because if we depart *to* there, we are not rulers of repentance neither can we

²² 2 Corinth. 6:2.

²³ Gal. 6:10.

²⁴ Luke 16:10-12.

²⁵ St. Clement of Rome, 2nd Corinthians, 8, 1-6, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 71-72.

²⁶ Ibid, 2nd Corinthians, 9, 7, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 72.

²⁷ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, 18, § 14, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1032-1033.

²⁸ St. Basil the Great, *Principals of Moralities, term I, II and V*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 31, 700-701.

²⁹ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily VI*, § 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 35, 944.

³⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *To Matthew*, Homily 36, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 57, 416.

³¹ Ibid, *To Psalm 9*, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 55, 127.

wash away the sins.”³² In addition he raised the question: “What hope, tell me, can you have after you depart with sins to there (Hades) where sins cannot be removed? For as long as they (the sinners) are here, there might be much hope of changing and becoming better; if they depart to Hades where there is nothing to gain from repentance, how can they not be worthy of lamentations?”³³

4. In This Life the Quality of the Soul’s Character is Imprinted

It is obvious that in this life man’s behaviour imprints his permanent character on his soul according to his deeds, decisions and directions, so that in the after death Life he has been finally stabilized and cannot be changed due to the condition of his soul at the time of death that will also be his Eternal condition.

St John Chrysostom expressed the above Truth by stating that when the souls depart from this world with sins, they appear as “being changed into the various sins” such as “drunkenness and gluttony” as well as the rest of the sinful passions, in which they indulged.³⁴

St Gregory of Nyssa spoke of those who had become completely “free from the flesh in mind and all movements of the soul and actions of the will of the flesh” and that “he who has become outside of the flesh has separated himself from its passions,” whereas those who are lovers of the flesh carry with them “some kind of stench of the flesh” even after death.³⁵

The Truth of the words of our Lord and Saviour and those of St Paul such as “...he who does not believe is condemned already...”³⁶ and “...knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned...”³⁷ is self-evident and as St Hippolytos observed: “...each one in which day he departs from this life has already been judged.”³⁸

5. The Luminous or Gloomy Angels who Carry the Souls

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ assured us that when Poor Lazaros died, his soul was “carried by the Angels to Abraham’s bosom”³⁹ while St John Chrysostom believed that “not only the souls of the Just, but even the souls of those who are living in evil are carried there” by the evil angels. Accordingly note what God said to the Foolish Rich Man: “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you.”⁴⁰ So, although “...Angels carried...” the soul of Poor Lazaros to Paradise, the soul of the foolish rich man “...was demanded by some frightful powers, sent for that purpose.

³² Ibid, *To Lazarus*, Homily 2, § 3, in Migne, P.G., 48, 985.

³³ Ibid, *To Philippians*, Homily 3, § 4, in Migne, P.G., 62, 293.

³⁴ St. John Chrysostom, *To Matthew*, Homily 14, § 4, in Migne, P.G., 57, 222. Ibid, *To Lazarus*, Homily 2, § 3, in Migne, P.G., 48, 985.

³⁵ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *About the soul and resurrection*, in Migne, P.G., 46, 85-86. Ibid, *About the soul’s departure*, in Migne, P.G., 34, 388.

³⁶ John 3:18.

³⁷ Titus 3:11.

³⁸ St. Hippolytus, *To Daniel 4:18*, in *B*, v. 6, p. 85.

³⁹ Luke 16:22.

⁴⁰ Luke 12:20.

And the one they carried out as *a prisoner*,” while Poor Lazaros they “...surrounded ... as crowned with Victory.”⁴¹ In other words, according to the common Teachings of the Holy Fathers and ecclesiastic writers, **when the soul departs** from this world **it is surrounded** by familiar spirits: the evil souls by evil spirits **and the virtuous souls by good Angels.**

St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr, interpreting the Psalmist: “...*deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion’s mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen...*”⁴² **commented** that we are taught from this that “... *when we also come to the moment of our departure, we must ask the same from God Who is able to turn away all impudent evil spirits [and] not to take our souls.*”⁴³

The annoyance **of the collection** of taxes **by tax-collectors**, **caused Origen to remark:** “*I know other tax-collectors who, after our freedom from here, sit at the ends of the world and demand taxes and hold us if we have anything of theirs.*” He **bases** his opinion mainly on the last words of Christ: “*For the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me*”⁴⁴ and he **wondered:** “*What things we will have of those tax-collectors who will search everything, when someone they take instead of tax?*” Elsewhere he **referred to** the verse in the Gospel of St Luke **that states:** “*...when you go with your adversary to the Magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drags you to the Judge, the Judge delivers you to the Officer, and the Officer throws you into prison,*”⁴⁵ **which** he interprets **as:**

- 1) “*the Ruler*” **being** the leading **Angel** of each nation,
- 2) “*the Adversary*” **being** one of the **Angels**,
- 3) “*the Magistrate and Judge*” **being** our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 4) “*the Officer*” **being** the **one** appointed to each man, **whether Angel or demon**, whom he **refers to as** “*the Adversary*,”⁴⁶ **because** “*there are two Angels with man, one of Righteousness and one of wickedness.*”⁴⁷

It is obvious that this is a reference to the Judgement through which each soul will pass as she departs from this world.

For these reasons, St Basil the Great urges those who have not yet received the Mystery of Holy Baptism to receive the **Divine Bath**. **He cautions** them that they might die suddenly **whereupon** the “*gloomy angel will come upon them violently and will drag their souls tied up with their sins,*” which they had not cleansed in time. Writing to a virgin **who** had fallen, he **reminded** her **of** “*the hour of death and the*

⁴¹ St. John Chrysostom, *To Lazarus*, Homily 2, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 48, 984.

⁴² Psalm 21(22):20-21.

⁴³ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 105, 3-5, in *B*, v. 3, p. 306.

⁴⁴ John 14:30.

⁴⁵ Luke 12:58.

⁴⁶ Origen, *To Luke*, Homilies 23 and 35, in Migne, *P.G.*, 13, 1862 and 1892-1893.

⁴⁷ *Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate 6, 2, 1, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 222.

angels rushing and the soul amongst them frightfully disturbed and the sinful conscience bitterly whipped.”⁴⁸

St Gregory of Nyssa, addressing those who delayed their Baptism, expressed serious **reservations as to whether** “the soul *that has not been Illuminated and Vested with the Grace of Regeneration..*” **could be received by the Angels** “... after the departure from the body? For how can they carry the unsealed, which does not bear the **Seal of the Master?**” He **believed** that **those souls would** be carried “by the air, deceived and wandering and unclaimed as masterless, similar to the rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously, feeding everyday the **Unquenchable Fire.**”⁴⁹

St Basil the Great continued **further by speaking of** the brave athletes of God who **overcome** the invisible enemies, **reassuring** them that “because they overcame all the persecutions of the enemies at the end of their lives they shall be investigated by the ruler of this world to see if they will be found **with** wounds from the battles or some spots and signs from sins in order to be seized...” **However, he encouraged us,** “... if they are found invincible and spotless they will rest as freed by Christ.”⁵⁰ His opinion **was supported by** the words **that** Christ **spoke** at the time of His **Sufferings:** “...for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.”⁵¹

St Augustine also referring to the abovementioned words of St Luke, **ascertained** that when life comes to its end, the **Judge** awaits **as well as** the **Officer** and the **Prison.** **Furthermore,** if **we have** kept good will with our **Adversary** and have agreed with him, instead of a **Judge** **we** will meet a **Father.**⁵² Beseeking God for the soul of his mother who had passed away and referring to the enemy, the devil, who will accuse and search **out** our mistakes **so as** to find something against us, he asks that the lion and dragon **not interfere** between that soul and God, neither with violence nor through **craftiness.**⁵³

St Athanasios **the Great** of Alexandria, narrating the life of St Anthony **recalled one** night **when** the hermit **Father** was called by **Someone** from **Above** to come out to **witness something.** As he came out he “saw a huge, ugly and frightful giant reaching to the clouds and some, as with wings, trying to pass him **by,** but, stretching **out** his arms, he prevented **them from passing him...**” **Some passed by and ascended calmly** although he **snapped** his teeth **at** them. “As his mind was opened, he understood that that was the passing of the souls and the giant was the enemy who envies them **and puts obstacles before those who are guilty,** but those who did not submit to him, he could not **control.**”⁵⁴

St Makarios the Egyptian, in his 22nd Homily, **wrote** that “when the soul departs from the body, if she is responsible for sins, a group of demons and powers of

⁴⁸ St. Basil the Great, *Homily 13 to holy Baptism*, § 8, In Migne, P.G., 31, 441 and 444. Ibid, *Epistle* 46, § 5, in Migne, P.G., 32, 377.

⁴⁹ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To those who delay the Baptism*, in Migne, P.G., 46, 424.

⁵⁰ St. Basil the Great, *To Psalm 7*, § 2, in Migne, P.G., 29, 232.

⁵¹ John 14:30.

⁵² St. Augustine, *Sermo CIX*, 4, in migne, P.L., 38, 636.

⁵³ Ibid, *Confessio*, book IX, ch. XIII, in migne, P.L., 32, 778-779.

⁵⁴ St. Athanasius, the Great, *Life and behaviour of holy father Anthony*, § 66, in Migne, P.G., 26, 936-937.

darkness take her and hold her in their own place.” On the contrary, “with the Holy Servants of God, from now the Angels are awaiting and Holy spirits are surrounding and protecting them. And when they come out of their body, the Choir of Angels receives their souls in their own place.”⁵⁵

St Cyril of Alexandria, noted in his 14th Homily on the departure of the soul and the Second Coming, that when the soul of the Just departs “*she is held by the Holy Angels and passing through the air, she ascends Above.*” On the way she meets the tax-collectors who guard the ascension of the souls by delaying them and putting obstacles in their paths as each tax-collector demon presents their own sins before them. There are five tax-collectors demons corresponding to the five senses of the body. In other words, there is the tax-collector of gossip, of the sins of the eyes, of the sins of evil hearing, of the sins of smelling and of the sins of feeling, each one presenting all sins that were committed while “*the Holy Angels who guide the soul, present whatever good they had done.*”⁵⁶

Finally, St John of Damascus, taking into consideration the above Teachings of the Holy Fathers, draws our attention to the fear and terror that each and every one of us will experience “*when the soul will be separated from the body.*” This fear is caused by “*an army and power of the enemy’s forces [that] comes to us...*” They are “*the rulers of the world of evil*” who “*in some way have the soul, presenting her all the sins, which were committed knowingly and in ignorance, from the time of our youth till that age, and they stand accusing her.*”⁵⁷

According to St John there are four Divine Judgements:

1. The Just Judgement
2. The Philanthropic Judgement
3. The Beyond Love Judgement, and
4. The Condemnation Judgement, although frightful, whereby God in His Divine Justice distributes “*all Justice, in a just way decreeing those who have been judged.*”

6. The Partial Judgement Differentiates from the General Judgement

In Holy Scripture and in the Teachings of the Holy Fathers, we find some verses that confuse the Partial Judgement with that of the General Judgement,⁵⁸ while the Just appear to be in the Hands of God immediately after their departure from this life, enjoying the fullness of their rewards. Parallel to these, however, are other verses of Holy Scripture as well as the opinions of the Holy Fathers, according to which the Partial Judgement differentiates from the General Judgement that will occur before

⁵⁵ St. Makarios, *About two ways of departing from this life*, in Migne, P.G., 34, 660.

⁵⁶ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Homily XIV*, in Migne, P.G., 77, 1073.

⁵⁷ St. John of Damascus, *About those who do not repent*, in Migne, P.G., 96, 156. Ibid, *About those who have fallen asleep in the faith*, § 25, in Migne, P.G., 95, 272.

⁵⁸ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 341-344.

the entire Universe following the second Coming of Christ and the general Resurrection of all.

Thus in Hebrews it is written “...and as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the *Judgement*.”⁵⁹ According to this verse it is generally assured that death comes before Judgment, without revealing whether Judgment will follow immediately after death or after a long period.⁶⁰ Nevertheless this verse does not eliminate the Middle Condition of the souls. Instead it refers to the General Judgment that will take place “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.”⁶¹ Obviously this General Judgment, according to which “we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad...”⁶² and afterwards “...those who are on the left Hand of the Judge to go to Everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Eternal Life...”⁶³ is indisputably distinguished in Holy Scripture from the Partial Judgment that occurs immediately after the departure from this life.

St John Chrysostom taught that “after the departure from here, we will stand before the *Frightful Seat* and we will give an account of all our deeds and responsibilities, and we will go through Judgment if we remain sinning, and we will enjoy crowns and unspeakable good things” if we repent and struggle. However, he does not confuse the Partial with the General Judgment.⁶⁴

St Cyril of Alexandria stressed that “the souls of the Saints rush into the hands of God. And the Lord gave to the human souls Paradise entering first and saying to the thief on the Cross: ‘Today, you will be with Me in Paradise.’⁶⁵ Such things and the blessed Stephen, when he was stoned, said: ‘Lord, Jesus Christ, receive my spirit,’⁶⁶ for the souls of the Saints did not go into Hades, as those of the sinners.”⁶⁷ Elsewhere he clarified it by stating: “...the Judgment will be after the Resurrection of the dead...” since Christ has not “...come down from Heaven, nor [has] the Resurrection ... taken place,” “...nor [has] the reward of the deeds ... followed.”⁶⁸

The Holy Fathers do not confuse the Partial Judgment with that of the General Judgment when they refer to the rewards that follow after death. They speak of the permanent and unchangeable condition of each soul when departing this life. They also refer to the foretaste of those things that await the souls of the Righteous and the sinners that will be awarded to each one, making the waiting period of the Just joyous but that of the sinners most wretched and full of torment. Finally, they contemplate

⁵⁹ Heb. 9:27.

⁶⁰ Androustos, *Dogmatique*, p. 412.

⁶¹ Matth. 25:31-32.

⁶² 2 Corinth. 5:10.

⁶³ Matth. 25:46.

⁶⁴ St. John Chrysostom, *To Matthew*, Homily 13, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 57, 213. Ibid, *To 1 Corinthians*, Homily 39, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 61, 335. Ibid, *To Hebrews*, Homily 28, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 63, 192.

⁶⁵ Luke 23:43.

⁶⁶ Acts 7:59.

⁶⁷ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Psalm 48(49):16*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 69, 1072.

⁶⁸ Ibid, *To Luke 16:19*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 72, 821-824.

the period between the departure of the soul from its body and the General Judgement.

St Clement of Rome **wrote**: “Peter, who, because of unrighteous jealousy, endured not one or two but many trials, and thus having given his testimony, went to his appointed place of glory.”⁶⁹ Concerning St Paul, he **wrote**: “Finally, when he had given his testimony before the rulers, he thus departed from the world and went to the **Holy Place**, having become an outstanding example of patient endurance.”⁷⁰ “To these men who lived Holy Lives there was joined a vast multitude of the Elect who, having suffered many torments and tortures because of jealousy, set an illustrious example among us ... suffering in this way terrible and unholy tortures, but they safely reached the **Goal in the Race of Faith**, and received a noble **Reward**.”⁷¹

Likewise in “*The Martyrdom of Polycarp*” it is written that “By his endurance he defeated the unrighteous magistrate and so received the **Crown of Immortality**; now he rejoices with the **Apostles** and all the **Righteous**, and glorifies the **Almighty God and Father**, and blesses our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of our souls and Helmsman of our bodies and Shepherd of the **Catholic Church** throughout the world.”⁷²

7. The Separation of the Souls

Although the difference between Partial and General Judgement is very clear, we must not forget that during the Partial Judgement the separation between righteous and sinners **occurs** immediately after the separation of the soul from its body and the **remains** in a special **Condition** (Middle Condition) **until** the Second Coming of Christ.

Origen observed that when the soul departs from this world it **is** placed according to its **spiritual** value and deeds, either **winning** **Eternal Life** and **Blessedness**, or **being** delivered into **Eternal Fire** and **perpetual** punishments **while** awaiting the **Resurrection in Immortality** and glory of its body **that** “is sown in corruption” but “raised in **Incorruption**.”^{73,74}

St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr **proclaimed** “...the souls of the **Righteous** stay in a greater place, the unjust and evil in a worse, that of Judgement.”⁷⁵

St Gregory of Nyssa observed that “...those who sailed the sea of **Virtue** in this present life, when they depart from here, the souls of the good sail **into** a secured **Port**.” On the contrary, **those** who lived in **sin** “... will be deprived from the imaginary goods ... and will not be comforted.”⁷⁶ Concerning the Middle Condition,

⁶⁹ St. Clement of Rome, *1st Corinthians*, 5, 3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 31.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, *1st Corinthians*, 5, 7, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 31.

⁷¹ St. Clement of Rome, *1st Corinthians*, 6, 1-2, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 31.

⁷² *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 19, 2, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 143.

⁷³ 1 Corinth. 15:42.

⁷⁴ Origen, *About principals*, I, 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 11, 118.

⁷⁵ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 5, 3, in *B*, v. 3, p. 214.

⁷⁶ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *About soul and resurrection*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 46, 84.

he stressed that “*Hades is not some kind of place, but a condition of Eternal Life, where the soul enters.*”⁷⁷

St Hippolytos, however, supported the opinion that all souls, the “righteous and unjust,” following the separation from the body, descend to a common place referred to as “Hades.” Furthermore, he confesses that although all souls descend into “that place,” they “do not follow one way” only because the Righteous “are led to an illustrious Place” referred to as “the bosom of Abraham” while “the unrighteous are dragged to the left by angels who punish, until near Hell.”⁷⁸

St John of Damascus, referring to the place that “is thought to be [of an] intellectual and incorporeal nature,” characterised it as “an intellectual place” because the incorporeal nature “does not have shape...” with which “... to surround itself bodily and does not move in body, but intellectually.” Thus “the Angel does not move *bodily* in space, to be imprinted and shaped.” Yet it is referred to as being “in a place” because they are intellectually present and not elsewhere. For this reason, incorporeal souls and Angels are described as intellectual beings wherever they are. “For the soul cannot act in various places simultaneously, because this is only [an ability] of God Who is Ever-present and acts at the same time,” whereas the Angel, because of his nature, although able to act in and move quickly to various places, “... is described in time and space, although intellectually.”⁷⁹

The Just and the sinners are in different situations in the Middle Condition because “all good and God-loving souls, released from the body, remain conscious and in the sight of the Good, enjoying some kind of pleasure and moving towards their Master, avoiding as prison the present life.”⁸⁰ In contrast, the souls of the sinners “think of the frightful Vision of the Fire with the waiting of the future Judgement...” and they are “already ... suffering.” Although “they are separated from their bodies, yet they are not separated from their passions,” carrying with them a fleshly stench. By not having the means with which to fulfil their sinful desires that they indulged in with their bodies, they suffer even more. These wretched souls are far away from the King while the souls of the Righteous, “either here or there, are with the King...” being “even closer” to Him after death.⁸¹

St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr referred to the special protection that the souls of the Righteous enjoy at the time of their departure, as we were taught by the Son Who gave up His Soul on the Cross saying: “Father, into Thy Hands I commit My Spirit.”^{82,83}

⁷⁷ Ibid, *About soul and resurrection*, in Migne, P.G., 46, 85.

⁷⁸ St. Hippolytus, *To Greeks*, homily I, in **B**, v. 6, p. 227.

⁷⁹ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About the place of God and that only the divine is indescribleable*, I, 13, in Migne, P.G., 94, 853.

⁸⁰ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *To Caesarius*, homily 7, § 2, in Migne, P.G., 35, 781.

⁸¹ St. John Chrysostom, *To Philippians*, Homily 3, § 3, in Migne, P.G., 62, 203. Athenagoras, *Deputation*, 31, in **B**, v. 4, p. 307. Androutsos, *Symbolique*, pp. 398-399.

⁸² Luke 23:46.

⁸³ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 5, 3, **B**, v. 3, p. 214.

St Clement of Rome **wrote**: “All the generations from Adam to this day have passed away but those who by God’s **Grace** were perfected in **Love**, have a place among the godly who will be revealed when the **Kingdom of Christ** visits us.”^{84,85}

The souls who have already departed this present life have not received their full reward or punishment, which will take place after the **Universal Resurrection**. After the Last Judgement **sinners will suffer Eternal Fire and Punishments**, whereas the **Righteous** will enjoy **Eternal and Blessed Joy** and will see God “...for now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”⁸⁶

⁸⁴ 1 Peter 2:12. Luke 19:44.

⁸⁵ St. Clement of Rome, *1st Corinthians*, 50, 3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 56.

⁸⁶ 1 Corinth. 13:12. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To John 19:30*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 74, 669. St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book V, ch. 31, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 1209. Cf. Hadjephraimides, p. 414.