

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE UNIVERSAL JUDGEMENT

The Universal Judgement of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will follow the Universal Resurrection.<sup>1</sup> According to Holy Scripture, one Day is appointed for Judgement when everyone, just and sinners, the living and dead, will appear before the Frightful Seat of Christ to be Judged according to their deeds. The Son of Man will sit on a Throne of Glory surrounded by countless Angels to Judge the works of men. His Judgement will have the measure of Love as the fulfilment of the Law. These works are known to Him because He sees the secrets of all hearts. Thus, the Final Judgement will be announced by rewarding each one according to his situation. Endless suffering and misery awaits those who have died unrepentant, thereby distancing themselves from God, whereas Eternal Blessedness, Joy, Glory, Honour and Peace await the Righteous who have been perfected in Christ. Consequently, the Righteous will reign with Christ for all Eternity, living inseparably with Him while enjoying the Blessedness and Glory as sons by Grace.

#### 1. The Universal Judgement According to Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition

In the Old Testament the idea of Judgement is one that causes catastrophe and destruction such as the Great Flood, the annihilation of Sodom and Gomorra, the ten plagues of Egypt and the various punishments suffered by the Israelites in Egypt and Canaan. This idea developed gradually and thereby Divine Revelation gained the acceptance of those to whom God reveals Himself. If, since the Judgement in the Old Testament appears at first as a direct Punishment of certain acts or circumstances, during the period of the Prophets the Divine Revenge against human error appears to be reserved for a certain Day of Judgement, when all nations will be Judged and as a consequence it will develop into a Day of Catastrophe. On that Day "...man and cattle [will] be cut off; let the birds of the air and the fishes of the sea be cut off; and the ungodly shall fail, and I will take away the transgressors from the face of the land, said the Lord."<sup>2</sup> "And it shall come to pass in that Day, said the Lord of Hosts, that I will utterly destroy the names of the idols from off the land, and there shall be no longer any remembrance of them: and I will cut off the false prophets and the evil spirit from the land."<sup>3</sup> "For behold, in those days and in that time, when I shall have turned the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all the Gentiles, and bring them down to the Valley of Josaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and My heritage Israel, who have been dispersed among Gentiles; and these Gentiles have divided My land, and cast lots over My people, and have given their boys to harlots, and sold their girls for wine, and have drunk."<sup>4</sup> This Judgement shall include Israel who will be Judged according to his works that "... the righteousness of the Righteous shall not deliver him, in the day wherein he errs: and the iniquity of the ungodly shall not harm him, in the day wherein he turns from his iniquity, but the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bryennios, *Paralipomena*, Homily I, v. II, pp. 299-308; and ch. XXVII, v. III, pp. 96-100. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 389-393.

<sup>2</sup> Zeph. 1:2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Zach. 13:2.

<sup>4</sup> Joel 3:1-3.

righteous erring shall not be able to deliver himself.”<sup>5</sup> “For, behold, the Lord will come as **Fire**, and **His** chariots as a storm to render **His Vengeance with Wrath**, and **His Rebuke with a Flame of Fire**. For with the **Fire of the Lord** all the earth shall be **Judged**, and all flesh with **His Sword**: many shall be slain by the Lord.”<sup>6</sup>

The Prophet Daniel presents the “Ancient of days” as sitting on a Throne, which “was a **Flame of Fire**, and **His wheels burning Fire...**” being ministered to by “...thousand thousands...” and “...ten thousands of myriads attended upon Him...” in order to Judge the works of each man according to the “...**Books...**” which “...were opened...” transmitting to Him “... the **Dominion**, and the **Honour**, and the **Kingdom...**” to Judge “...all nations, tribes, and languages.”<sup>7</sup>

The Prophet Isaiah **simultaneously** foresaw the first **Coming** and the **Second Coming** of the Lord: “...the **Day of Lord** is near, and destruction from God shall arrive.”<sup>8</sup> “For behold! The **Day of the Lord** is coming which cannot be escaped, a **Day of Wrath and Anger**, to make the world desolate and to destroy sinners out of it. For the stars of **Heaven and Orion** and all the **Host of Heaven** shall not give their light; and it shall be dark at sunrise and the moon shall not give her light. And I will **Command evils for the whole world**, and will visit their sins on the ungodly: and I will destroy the pride of transgressors, and will bring low the pride of the haughty.”<sup>9</sup> “For the **Heavens** shall be enraged, and the earth shall be shaken from her foundation, because of the fierce **Anger of the Lord of Hosts**, in the day in which **His Wrath** shall come.”<sup>10</sup>

The Lord had no need to **essentially** change or to perfect the **Teachings** of the **Prophets** concerning the Day of Judgement. He joined the **Teachings** of the **Prophets** concerning the **Final Judgement** of each man with the **Final Judgement** of all the nations. **Thus in His speech on the Mount He stated**: “Many will say to Me in that **Day**, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in **Thy Name**, cast out demons in **Thy Name**, and done many wonders in **Thy Name**? And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”<sup>11</sup> He specifically **mentioned the** “...**Day of Judgement...**” in which “...it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon...”<sup>12</sup> and on which **Day** men shall “...give account...” “...for every idle word...”<sup>13</sup> “...for the Son of Man will come in the **Glory of His Father with His Angels**, and then He will reward each according to his works.”<sup>14</sup> Christ will **Judge** all nations, since “...all nations will be gathered before Him.”<sup>15</sup>

**Our Lord refers to** this Day of Judgement in His **Parables** of the Wheat and Tares,<sup>16</sup> the Dragnet,<sup>17</sup> the Ten Virgins,<sup>18</sup> the Ten Talents,<sup>19</sup> the King “...who wanted

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<sup>5</sup> Ez. 33:12.

<sup>6</sup> Is. 66:15-16.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel 7:9-12.

<sup>8</sup> Is. 13:6.

<sup>9</sup> Is. 13:9-11.

<sup>10</sup> Is. 13:13.

<sup>11</sup> Matth. 7:22-23.

<sup>12</sup> Matth. 11:22.

<sup>13</sup> Matth. 12:36.

<sup>14</sup> Matth. 16:27.

<sup>15</sup> Matth. 25:32.

<sup>16</sup> Matth. 13:24-30; 36-43.

to settle accounts with his servants,<sup>20</sup> the Labourers<sup>21</sup> as well as the Royal Wedding.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, our Lord systematically referred to this Day in His eschatological speeches addressed to His Apostles and Disciples shortly before His Sufferings.<sup>23</sup> As in the Book of Daniel whereby the “Ancient of old” appears at first as the Judge but then transmits the “dominion” to the “Son of Man,” likewise in the Teachings of Christ. In some cases, the Heavenly Father “Who sees in secret, will Himself reward...” those who do “...charitable deeds...”<sup>24</sup> or pray,<sup>25</sup> or confess Him before men,<sup>26</sup> while in others, the Lord appears as the Lord of the Entrance of the Kingdom of Heaven. He excludes all those who have worked evil and lawlessness,<sup>27</sup> with Authority as the Son of Man Who sends before Him His Angels “...to gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the Furnace of Fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the Righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father...”<sup>28</sup> The Son of Man “...will come in the Glory of His Father with His Angels...” to “...reward each according to his works...”<sup>29</sup> He “...will appear in Heaven...” “...coming on the clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory...”<sup>30</sup> and will Judge all nations. He will Condemn the sinners “...into the Everlasting Fire prepared for the devil and his angels...” “...but the Righteous into Eternal Life.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, “...the Father Judges no one, but has committed all Judgement to the Son...”<sup>32</sup> “...and has given Him Authority to execute Judgement also because He is the Son of Man.”<sup>33</sup> Truly the Lord Judging as Man, “...Judges as He hears...” from the Father and “...does nothing on His own.” Consequently He Judges “...as if the Father Himself was the Judge...”<sup>34</sup> However, Christ Judges us because He is closer to our humanity and because He gave us the Laws and Suffered for our Salvation, thereby being the only proper Judge of all mankind.

Furthermore, the Holy Apostles repeated the Teachings of our Lord. St Peter testified that Jesus Christ is “...Ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.”<sup>35</sup>

St Paul assured us that God has appointed a Day on which “...the Lord Jesus Christ, will Judge the living and the dead at His Appearing and His Kingdom.”<sup>36</sup> He

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<sup>17</sup> Matth. 13:47-50.

<sup>18</sup> Matth. 25:1-13.

<sup>19</sup> Matth. 25:14-30.

<sup>20</sup> Matth. 18:23-35.

<sup>21</sup> Matth. 20:1-16.

<sup>22</sup> Matth. 22:2-14.

<sup>23</sup> Matth. 24:1-25:1-46. Mark 13:1-37. Luke 21:5-36.

<sup>24</sup> Matth. 6:4.

<sup>25</sup> Matth. 6:6.

<sup>26</sup> Matth. 10:32-33.

<sup>27</sup> Matth. 18:34-35.

<sup>28</sup> Matth. 13:41-43.

<sup>29</sup> Matth. 16:27.

<sup>30</sup> Matth. 24:30.

<sup>31</sup> Matth. 25:31-46.

<sup>32</sup> John 5:22.

<sup>33</sup> John 5:27.

<sup>34</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *To John 5:30*, in Migne, P.G., 59, 225.

<sup>35</sup> Acts 10:42.

<sup>36</sup> 2 Tim. 4:1.

presents that Day as a “*Day of Wrath and Revelation of the Righteous Judgement of God, Who will render to each one according to his deeds; Eternal Life to those who by patient **continuance** in doing good, seek for glory, honour and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness – indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil...*”<sup>37</sup>. Parallel to this, he characterises this Appearance as a Revelation of “...*the Lord Jesus...*” Who will be “...*revealed from Heaven with His mighty Angels in flaming Fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with Everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord and from the Glory of His Power when He comes in that Day to be Glorified in His Saints and to be admired among all those who believe.*”<sup>38</sup>

The *Epistle of Barnabas* literally assures us that “...*the Son of God, Who is Lord and is destined to Judge the living and the dead, suffered in order that His Wounds might give us Life.*”<sup>39</sup> “*For they will see Him on that Day, wearing a long scarlet robe about His Body, and they will say, ‘Is this not the One Whom we once crucified and insulted by spitting upon Him? Surely this was the Man Who said then that He was the Son of God!’*”<sup>40</sup>

St Clement of Rome testified that “...*we ought to think of Jesus Christ as we do of God: as ‘Judge of the living and the dead.’*”<sup>41</sup>

St Polycarp of Smyrna certified that Jesus Christ “...*is coming as ‘Judge of the living and the dead.’*”<sup>42 43</sup>

Likewise in the *Epistle to Diognetos*, at the first appearance of Christ, the Father “...*sends Him as Calling, not persecuting; as Loving, not Judging,*” which is distinguished from His Second Coming when the Father “...*will send Him to Judge, and who can [with]stand His Appearance?*”<sup>44</sup>

St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr frequently reiterated that “... *the Judge of all the living and the dead is Christ Himself.*”<sup>45</sup>

St Cyril of Jerusalem declared on the one hand that Christ “*is coming not to be judged again, but to Judge those who judged Him*” whereas on the other hand he stressed that the Father Himself does not Judge anyone as He “...*gave all to the Son, not alienating Himself from the Authority, but Judging through the Son. Through the nod of the Father, the Son Judges. For there are no other nods of the Father or of the Son... as it is ... ‘one and the same.’*”<sup>46</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Rom. 2:5-9.

<sup>38</sup> 2 Thess. 1:7-10.

<sup>39</sup> *Barnabas*, 7, 2, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 170.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 7, 9, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 171.

<sup>41</sup> St. Clement of Rome, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Corinthians*, 1, 1, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 68.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Acts 10:42.

<sup>43</sup> St. Polycarp, *To Philippians*, 2, 1, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>44</sup> *Diognetus*, 7, 5, 6, in *B*, v. 2, p. 254.

<sup>45</sup> St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 118, 1, in *B*, v. 3, p. 317.

<sup>46</sup> St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, XV, §§ 1 and 25, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 869.

Zigabinos emphasised that “...the Son Judges with the consent of the Father and the cooperation of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>47</sup>

There is no doubt that the Judgement will be in all Justice, for God will Judge the entire world with Justice<sup>48</sup> and without partiality. He “...will render to each one according to his deeds.”<sup>49</sup> Subsequently, all the secret works of men will be revealed because He Who sits on the Throne of Judgement is He Who always knows and seeks the hearts of men, “...piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His Sight, but all things are naked and open to the Eyes of Him to Whom we must give account.”<sup>50</sup> The Lord “...will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts...”<sup>51</sup> “...in the Day when God will Judge the secrets of men...”<sup>52</sup> demanding an account not only for the offences of the Law, but for every word and every deed they neglected to do, for “...to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”<sup>53</sup> “And the dead were Judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the Books.”<sup>54</sup>

## 2. The Punishments

The Punishments that will be bestowed by the Judge on the condemned,<sup>55</sup> can be categorized as either negative and positive, or internal and external.

Mesoloras classifies three groups of Eternal Punishment: Firstly, being deprived of all God’s Grace. Secondly, the positive and internal Punishment, whereby the guilt of the conscience and awareness of guilt will be like an “*unsleeping worm*” that will eat at hearts, distressing them forever. Thirdly, the external Punishment, according to which the soul will suffer Eternal pain of the Fire, sadness, external Darkness and communion with the evil spirits.<sup>56</sup>

If one just considers the Divine Wrath resulting in the alienation of those who will be condemned by God Who is the only True Source of all Peace and Blessedness, and who will be deprived of the Vision of the Divine Glory of the Holy Trinity, this alone should be considered as an unbearable Punishment!

St John Chrysostom observed: “...it is more beneficial to be struck by thousands of lightnings, rather than to see that calm Face turning away from us and that calm

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<sup>47</sup> Zigabinos, *To John 5:22*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 129, 1217. Cf. Mogilas, *A’*, 58 and 59, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, pp. 620-621.

<sup>48</sup> Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, p. 126.

<sup>49</sup> Rom. 2:6.

<sup>50</sup> Heb. 4:12-13.

<sup>51</sup> 1 Corinth. 4:5.

<sup>52</sup> Rom. 2:16.

<sup>53</sup> James 4:17.

<sup>54</sup> Rev. 20:12.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, pp. 165-166. Evdokimov, *Orthodoxia*, pp. 443-447. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 235-236. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 397-403.

<sup>56</sup> Mesoloras, *Symbolique*, v. II, p. 129.

eye not standing to watch us.”<sup>57</sup> Elsewhere, he **pointed** out that “...the falling from the good things, has so much pain, so much sadness and worry...” **that if** no other Punishment was given to sinners, **that alone would** be sufficient “...to make the torments in the Hell more bitter than to **bite** and to shake the souls of the sinners.”<sup>58</sup> Elsewhere, he invites each Christian to imagine that “...anything **secret...**” done by man “...will be presented in the midst...” and will be **exposed before** the fullness of the Church. **Therefore, it is most** beneficial for those sins to be covered. “How much will be the embarrassment of the sinners, when before the entire universe **their deeds** will be revealed?” **Visualize the theatre as not being filled only with mankind but also with all the Hosts of Angels consisting of the Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Authorities, Powers, Cherubim and Seraphim.**<sup>59</sup>

The negative **aspect** of the future **Condemnation** is inseparably united to the positive **aspect**. **Primarily, there will be** the disgrace that will **overcome sinners** due to **having** “...before their eyes their sins for all Eternity..” for which they **will be** condemned to “...hard punishment...” “...the pain and the disgrace of which are really **Eternal.**”<sup>60</sup> “To those who have sinned greatly in their lives, frightful and gloomy angels are present, seeing **Fire**, breathing **Fire**, because of the bitterness of the free will, having dark faces because of their gloomy **hatred** for man. Then a deep **Chasm** and **Darkness** without end and **Fire** without light; having in the darkness the caustic power, removing the light. Then the generation of the vapour worms ... flesh eating and never satisfying, bringing unbearable pains with the eating.”<sup>61</sup>

St John Chrysostom **referred to the** “...unceasing worms and unquenchable **Fire** and **gnashing** of teeth and external **Darkness** and sadness and **anxiety.**”<sup>62</sup>.

Undoubtedly, the descriptions of the **Punishments** by the **Holy Fathers** as **mentioned above**, do not differ from **those revealed** by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, when He spoke of the **Punishments** **that** await the ungodly after the Final Judgement. **Expressions such as** “outer darkness,” the “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” the “**Everlasting Punishment,**” “**Hell,**” “the **Fire** that shall never be quenched,” the “**Worm which does not die**” and “**torment of Flame,**”<sup>63</sup> are a few of **those that our Lord Himself** used to **describe** the **Eternal Punishments**.

The **exact nature** of these **Punishments** is **unknown** since they **occur** in the **After Life**, which is **beyond human** senses and invisible. **As St Paul expresses it:** “...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.”<sup>64</sup> **It may vaguely be perceived by means of the Parable of the Rich Man and Poor Lazarus,**<sup>65</sup> **according to which** the **Rich Man** found

<sup>57</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *To the fallen Theodorus*, I, 10, in Migne, *P.G.*, 47, 291.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, *To Matthew*, Homily 23, §§ 7 and 8, in Migne, *P.G.*, 57, 318.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, *To Romans*, Homily 5, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 60, 430. *Ibid*, *To the fallen Theodorus*, I, 11, in Migne, *P.G.*, 47, 292.

<sup>60</sup> St. Basil the Great, *To Psalm 33(34)*, §§ 4 and 8, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 364 and 372.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, *To Psalm 33(34)*, § 8, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 372.

<sup>62</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *To the fallen Theodorus*, I, §§ 9 and 10, in Migne, *P.G.*, 47, 288 and 289. *Ibid*, *To Hebrews*, Homily 1, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 63, 18.

<sup>63</sup> Matth. 8:12; 25:46. Mark 9:45-48. Luke 16:24.

<sup>64</sup> 1 Corinth. 13:12.

<sup>65</sup> Luke 16:19-31.

himself in Hell, “...being in torments...”<sup>66</sup> and completely deprived from all the good things that he had enjoyed in this present life. His heart was enslaved by earthly things and the vanity of the pleasures of the flesh, which he could no longer satisfy. He was in the midst of a fiery Furnace that caused him terrible thirst and great anxiety. Also in this Parable, our Lord referred to a “...place of torment...”<sup>67</sup> that is separated by “...a great gulf...” from the place of the Righteous.<sup>68</sup> In addition to all this, our Lord spoke of “...the Everlasting Fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”<sup>69</sup>

“Hell,” “Everlasting Fire” or “the Outer Darkness”<sup>70</sup> is a spiritual condition that God created not for man, but because of Satan and his angels being stubbornly unrepentant. This condition is real, unchangeable and eternal, since the Will of God is Eternal and Unchangeable. No one can adequately describe this condition that is beyond any human understanding, not even St Paul who was “caught up in Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”<sup>71</sup> Similarly, should anyone enter into Hell, he would be completely unable to express the terrifying things he might see, hear or feel.

### 3. The Blessedness of the Righteous

The Blessedness that awaits the Righteous, filling hearts with an inexpressible Joy and Happiness, will be due to the assurance that they have been Saved forever.<sup>72</sup> The positive aspect of the future inheritance of the Righteous is expressed as “Paradise of God,” where “...the Tree of Life is in the midst...”<sup>73</sup> and in which “...inexpressible words...” are heard, “...which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”<sup>74</sup> This Eternal Life is also described as the “City of God,” “...the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband...”<sup>75</sup> or as “...the Tabernacle of God...” that is with men and where He “...will dwell with them...”<sup>76</sup> Furthermore it is described as the “...Father’s house...” which has “...many mansions...”<sup>77</sup> as well as being proclaimed as “...the Bride, the Lamb’s wife...”<sup>78</sup> that has “...the Glory of God.”<sup>79</sup> Other descriptions of Eternal Life are: as the future City that has “...no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its Temple;”<sup>80</sup> “...Assembly and Church of the Firstborn who are Regenerated in Heaven;”<sup>81</sup> “...an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled;” that

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<sup>66</sup> Luke 16:23.

<sup>67</sup> Luke 16:28.

<sup>68</sup> Luke 16:26.

<sup>69</sup> Matth. 25:41.

<sup>70</sup> Kefalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 242-243.

<sup>71</sup> 2 Corinth. 12:4.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, pp. 164-165. Evdokimov, *Orthodoxia*, pp. 441-443.

Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 393-397.

<sup>73</sup> Rev. 2:7.

<sup>74</sup> 2 Corinth. 12:4.

<sup>75</sup> Rev. 20:2.

<sup>76</sup> Rev. 20:3.

<sup>77</sup> John 14:2.

<sup>78</sup> Rev. 21:9.

<sup>79</sup> Rev. 21:11.

<sup>80</sup> Rev. 21:22.

<sup>81</sup> Heb. 12:23.

“...does not fade away, reserved in **Heaven**,”<sup>82</sup> “...**Kingdom of Heaven**,”<sup>83</sup> “...**Kingdom of God**,”<sup>84</sup> “...**Kingdom of the Father of the Lord**”<sup>85</sup> or “...**Kingdom prepared for the Blessed**...”<sup>86</sup> wherein the Lord will not only drink from the new Cup with His Disciples,<sup>87</sup> but **they** “...shall also reign with Him.”<sup>88</sup> No words can describe the perfect beauty of the Heavenly Things that await the Righteous who will partake in the Divine Nature of our Lord, watching and enjoying the Glory of the Holy Trinity, our True and Only God.

In God’s Kingdom there is no fear, hunger or illness. No one is in pain, angry or flamed by desire because all these passions have been wiped away. No one will age because all will be vested with Immortality and Everlasting Joy, living together with the Angels, Archangels and all the higher Heavenly Powers. There will be no war or rebellion. There will only be the agreement of and harmony with the Saints and the oneness of mind.<sup>89</sup>

The factor and cause of this Blessedness that the Saints experience, is referred to as “**Deification**” or “**Theosis**” that begins in this world. The final Purpose of the Lord’s Incarnation is to lead fallen mankind towards the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven so that we may enjoy Divine Blessedness and be Deified. The term “**Deification**” or “**Theosis**” of our human nature and Deification of the Just, is understood as men becoming through this Deification “...partakers of the Divine Nature...”<sup>90</sup> While human nature is not abolished, being absorbed by the infinite Divine Nature, it partakes according to its limitations in the Life and Glory of God. Each of the Righteous, preserving his own personality and being, is raised up to approach the Divine but remaining always limited.

In the Divine Incarnation of the Word and Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity took up the whole human nature, without sin, and was united with her in one Person and in one Hypostasy, His two Natures remaining “unmixed and their attributes unchangeable; and the **Flesh was Deified**, but it did not change its own Nature.”<sup>91</sup> Incomparably and to a greater degree the Deification of the Righteous, in which each one preserves his own personality, is clearly distinguished from the three Persons of the Holy Trinity because human nature is not in essence united to the Divine Nature. Human nature continues to remain human and within its own limits. However, by Grace and not by nature, it unites with the Divine Nature, participating in the Divine Life and Glory. The Word as the Infinite God “...alone has **Immortality**, dwelling in **Unapproachable Light**, Whom no man has seen or can see...”<sup>92</sup> but the Deified nature of man is united with Him, thereby comprising His Divine and Mystic “**Body...**” which is “... the fullness of Him Who fills all in all.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> 1 Peter 1:4.

<sup>83</sup> Matth. 4:17; 5:3, 10, 20; 13:24, 31, 44, 47; 16:19; 18:23; 19:12; 20:1; 22:2; 23:13; 25:1, 14

<sup>84</sup> Luke 14:15. Matth. 19:24; 21:31

<sup>85</sup> Matth. 26:29

<sup>86</sup> Matth. 25:34.

<sup>87</sup> Matth. 26:29.

<sup>88</sup> 2 Tim. 2:12.

<sup>89</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *To the fallen Theodorus*, I, § 11, in Migne, P.G., 47, 291.

<sup>90</sup> 1 Peter 1:4.

<sup>91</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Catechesis*, III, 17, in Migne, P.G., 94, 1069.

<sup>92</sup> 1 Tim. 6:16.

<sup>93</sup> Ephes. 1:23.

This union, in which the **Divine and Infinite Nature** of God the Word, although hypostatically united with the human **Nature** of the God-Man to which we are also united, remains unapproachable to us. **We** cannot be united **in essence** to it. This remains a “*Great Mystery*.”<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, our **Union** as members of the Church with Christ begins in this life, from the moment of our **Baptism** into Christ. **Consequently, it** is perfected in that **Blessed** condition, becoming the Source of the new **Holy and Divine Life** that gives **Life** to the whole **Body**. The reason **for** the exaltation of the body into the “*Glory and Majesty*”<sup>95</sup> of God is its **Union and Communion** with Christ, **Who** is “...*the Peace of God, which surpasses all understanding...*” and which “... *will guard...*” “...*hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*”<sup>96</sup>

An Orthodox Christian becomes an imitator of Christ **during this lifetime** and his members are formed according to the **Members of Christ**. **The statement** “...*as many of you as were Baptised into Christ, have put on Christ...*”<sup>97</sup> **assures us that during this life we do so** in power **as well as** in principal, whereas in the future **Life we** will put Him on in perfection and energy.

According to **St John the Apostle, Evangelist and Theologian**, “...*it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*”<sup>98</sup> **Furthermore,** only by seeing Him as He is will create a great **Joy**, just **as at** the time of the Lord’s **Transfiguration** **when** the two **Prophets** Moses and Elijah appeared before the Lord on Mount Tabor **and** St Peter said to **our Lord** Jesus: “*Lord, it is good for us to be here.*”<sup>99</sup> The **Vision** of the **Divine Glory** makes all those who see **participators**, as St Paul **taught us by** saying that “...*we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the Glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to Glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord,*”<sup>100</sup> **and the Lord said:** “... *the Righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.*”<sup>101</sup>

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in His **prayer addressed** to His Father shortly before His Sufferings, **asked Him** “...*that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, are in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us.*”<sup>102</sup> He **asked the Father to grant** that all who belong to Him become “... *one to another in the sameness of soul and the unity of the spirit, not disagreeing, but all having the same mind*”. As the Son “*is by nature and truly one with His Father*”, likewise also we “*become the same generation to another through the intension having the unity of the Son to the Father*”. In the blessed condition all the righteous will be united in one and will copy the unity of the Holy Trinity, as far as possible to their human capability, “*for it is impossible to become equal to it*”, and they shall live according to the blessed life of the Holy Trinity.

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<sup>94</sup> Ephes. 5:32.

<sup>95</sup> Psalm 44(45):3.

<sup>96</sup> Phil. 4:7.

<sup>97</sup> Gal. 3:27.

<sup>98</sup> 1 John 3:2.

<sup>99</sup> Matth. 17:4.

<sup>100</sup> 2 Corinth. 3:18.

<sup>101</sup> Matth. 13:43. Zigabinos, *To Matthew*, in Migne, P.G., 129, 416.

<sup>102</sup> John 17:21.

