

However, both the New Testament and Orthodox patristic tradition suggest that all people will appear with some experience of an encounter with Christ and His message, including those who did not meet Him in their earthly life. In particular, St Peter speaks of Christ's descent into Hell and His preaching there to those sinners who were drowned in the waters of the Flood: 'For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you... through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...' (1 Pet.3:18-21)

If Christ preached in Hell, was His message addressed to all people or only to the chosen ones? According to some church writers, Christ preached only to the Old Testament righteous who were in Hell waiting for Him. For others, the message of Christ was addressed to all people, including those who lived in paganism, outside the true faith. This view is expressed by Clement of Alexandria, who maintains that Christ preached not to the righteous who were to be saved, but to the sinners who were condemned for their evil actions. The sinners who were confined in Hell must have met the Lord in order to appear before Him at the Last Judgment.

Can there be an answer here to the complex question of whether or not there exists the possibility for non-Christians and non-believers to be saved? The Orthodox tradition has always asserted that there is no salvation outside Christ, Baptism and the Church . However, not everyone who during his earthly life did not meet Christ is deprived of the possibility of being liberated from Hell, for even in Hell the message of the Gospel is heard. Having created the human person with free will, God accepted responsibility for his salvation; and this salvation has been accomplished by Christ. A person who deliberately rejects Christ and His Gospel makes his choice for the devil and becomes himself guilty of his own condemnation: '...He who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God' (John 3:18). But how can someone who has not heard the Gospel at all be condemned, someone born in a non-Christian country or who grew up in an atheist family? 'Imagine that the Gospel was not proclaimed to those who died before Christ's coming', Clement of Alexandria says. 'Then both their salvation and their condemnation is a matter of crying injustice'. In the same manner those who died after Christ's coming but had not heard the Gospel's message cannot be treated as if they deliberately rejected Him. This is why Christ preached in Hell in order that every human person created by Him would make a choice for good or evil, and in connection with this choice be either saved or condemned.

<http://www.souroz.org/orthodox-faith-texts/the-last-judgment.html>

THE WORD 'GOD'

The words used to refer to 'God' in different languages are related to various concepts. The peoples of antiquity attempted to find in their languages a word to express their notion of God or, rather, their experience of encounter with the Divinity.

In the languages of Germanic origin the word Gott comes from a verb meaning 'to fall to the ground', to fall in worship. This reflects an experience similar to that of St Paul, who, when illumined by God on the road to Damascus, was struck by divine light and immediately 'fell to the ground... in fear and trembling' (Acts 9:4-6).

In the Slavic languages the word Bog ('God') is related to the Sanskrit bhaga, which means 'dispensing gifts', and which in its turn comes from bhagas, meaning 'inheritance', 'happiness', 'wealth'. The Slavonic word bogatstvo means 'riches', 'wealth'. Here we find God expressed in terms of the fullness of being, perfection and bliss. These properties, however, do not remain within God, but are poured out onto the world, onto people and onto all living things. God dispenses the gift of His plenitude and endows us with His riches, when we turn to Him.

According to Plato, the Greek word for God, Theos , originates from the verb thein , meaning 'to run'. St Gregory the Theologian identifies a second etymology beside the one of Plato: he claims that the name Theos comes from the verb aithein , meaning 'to be set alight', 'to burn', 'to be aflame'. St Basil the Great offers two more etymologies: 'God is called Theos either because He placed (tetheikenai) all things, or because He beholds (theasthai) all things'.

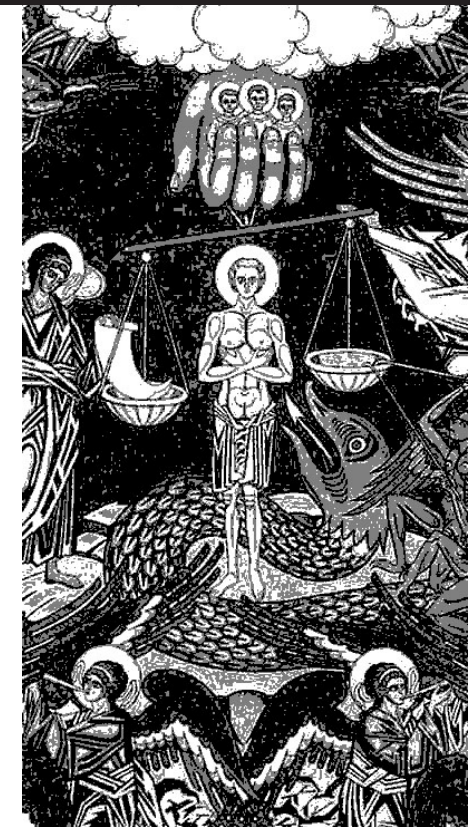
The Name by which God revealed Himself to the ancient Israelites was Yahweh , meaning 'The One Who Is', that is, the One Who has existence and being. It derives from the verb hayah , meaning 'to be', 'to exist', or rather from the first person of this verb, ehieh - 'I am'. This verb has a dynamic meaning: it does not simply denote the fact of existence, but signifies a living and actual presence. When God tells Moses 'I am who I am' (Ex.3:14), this means 'I live, I am here, I am together with you'. At the same time this name emphasizes the superiority of God's being over all other beings. He is the independent, primary, eternal being, the plenitude of being which is above being.

Ancient tradition tells us that after the Babylonian captivity, the Jews refrained out of reverential awe from uttering the name Yahweh , the One Who Is. Only the high priest could do so, and this once a year on the day of Yom Kippur, when he went into the Holy of Holies to offer incense. If an ordinary person or even a priest wanted to say something about God, he substituted other names for Yahweh , usually the name Adonai (the Lord). In script the Jews indicated the word 'God' by the sacred tetragrammaton YHWH. The ancient Jews knew well that there was no name or word in human language that could convey the essence of God. In refraining from pronouncing the name of God, the Jews showed that it is possible to be at one with God not so much through words and descriptions, but through a reverential and trembling silence.

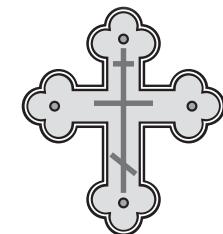
<http://www.souroz.org/orthodox-faith-texts/the-word-god.html>

SS. Constantine and Elena Orthodox Church

February 11, 2018



THE LAST JUDGMENT/MEATFARE SUNDAY



Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, OCA
3237 West 16th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46222
317.638.4162 • saintsconstantineandelena.org

The Reverend Father David T. Wey, *Parish Priest*
317.484.1288 (home) • 317.627.2282 (cell)
Rev. Dn. Paul McDonald, *attached* 317.696.0079 (cell)

PARISH LIFE

MONDAY – SATURDAY FEBRUARY 12-17: DAIRY WEEK

FEBRUARY 11, 2018: 35TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST/

THE LAST JUDGMENT/MEATFARE SUNDAY (TONE 3, MATINS GOSPEL 3)

8:40 am Matins

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

6:15 pm Daily Vespers

7:00 pm “Heavenly Banquet” Special Study: The Judgment

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

4:15 pm Church School

5:00 pm Mystery of Confession (by appointment, please)

6:00 pm Great Vespers (followed by confessions)

PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND OF OUR PARISH:

James Barnes, Victor Cosgarea, Jay Hanko, Jan Isham, Zachary Waltz, and Margaret Wey

LOOKING AHEAD...

Next Sunday's readings: (36th Sunday after Pentecost: Expulsion of Adam from Paradise/Forgiveness Sunday/Cheese-fare): Romans 13:11-14, 14:1-4; Matthew 6:14-21.

Sunday, February 18: Cheese-fare Sunday

12:00 pm Forgiveness Vespers with the Service of Mutual Forgiveness immediately after Liturgy

Monday, February 19: Great Lent Begins

6:30 am Lenten Matins

8:00 am Lenten 1st Hour

6:30 pm Great Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew (1st part)

Tuesday-Thursday, February 20-22: Clean Week

6:30 am Lenten Matins

8:00 am Lenten 1st Hour (with Academy students)

6:30 pm Great Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew (Wednesday Presanctified Liturgy followed by Lenten Pitch-in)

Friday, February 23

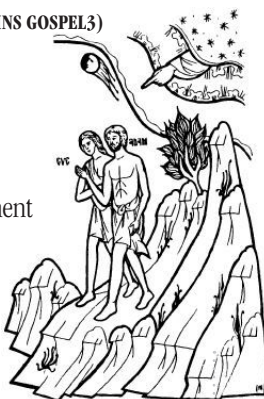
6:30 pm Service of the Akathist

Saturday, February 24: Theodore Saturday

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Sunday, February 25

5:00 pm Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers and shared meal (St. George Church)



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Contact Isaac Lashbrook if you are interested in participating in our parish's fundraising committee. In the coming weeks the committee will brainstorm ideas for how to raise the remaining amount we need to build our new fellowship hall. You can reach Isaac at 317-319-2182 or at isaac.lashbrook@gmail.com.

NEW PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR 2018

During the Annual Meeting held at the end of January, a few new members were added to the Parish Council. If you have any questions or concerns about church matters, speak with one of the Council members: Ed Rensink (President), Nic Boanta, Ed Brickle, Clara Clemens, John Geist, Isaac Lashbrook, Sbdn. Max Murphy, Olivia Napariu, Brian Pletcher, Jamie Spence, or Kathryn Wilson.

BOOK STUDY RESUMES

The Wednesday evening we take up again our study of The Heavenly Banquet. This week we will discuss “The Judgment.” (This will be the last class held until after Pascha.) All are invited and encouraged to attend, and be edified in the discussion of the fullness of our Orthodox Faith.

PROJECT MEXICO TRIP THIS SUMMER

Although we are not sponsoring a trip this year to Project Mexico, a group from Holy Trinity Greek Church is hoping to do so. Anyone interested in joining them should let Fr. David or Neal Locasto know right away. Details can be given at that time. This is a wonderful opportunity for service and adventure, particularly for parents with their teens.

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY SHARED MEAL

Our annual gathering of all the Orthodox faithful in Central Indiana, for the Sunday of Orthodoxy, will be held on February 25 at 5 pm, at St. George Orthodox Church in Fishers. As is the custom, each parish is asked to bring a food item for the shared meal following the Vespers Service. Our parish is asked to provide salads for 150 people (along with St. John the Forerunner providing the other half). Please give thought to how you can contribute. A Sign-up Genius has been posted online.

HOUSEKEEPING IS EVERYONE'S JOB

A few reminders of which all parishioners should be aware, concerning the buildings and grounds:

- If you are the last one out of the building (in particular, the church hall), please be sure all lights are turned off and the door is locked. This is most needed at the end of the Sunday fellowship hour. (Note that the bathrooms now have automatic shut offs.)
- Try to avoid leaving left-over food in the refrigerators – it most always goes bad, and someone else will have to deal with the ugly remains.
- If each person will attempt to clean up after themselves (coffee hour trash,

etc.), it will make less work for others. Any conscientious attempts to pick up trash off the grounds is also appreciated!

- The last person or group to leave the yard behind St. Nicholas House should be sure to close the black gate on the east side of the house; please teach your children to do the same.

THE LAST JUDGMENT

At the moment of death, the soul leaves the body and enters its new mode of existence. It does not lose its memory or its ability to think or to feel, but departs to the other world loaded with the burden of its life, with memories of its past and an accountability for its sins.

Christian teaching on the Last Judgment is based on the understanding that all sinful and evil deeds committed by the person leave certain traces on his soul, and that the person is to give an account for everything before that Absolute Good, with Which no evil or sin can coexist. The Kingdom of God is incompatible with sin: ‘...Nothing unclean will enter it, nor any one who practises abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life’ (Rev.21:27). Every evil for which repentance was not shown at the sacrament of confession, every sin which was concealed, every defilement of the soul which was not purified, all of this will be revealed during the Last Judgment. In the words of Christ, ‘...There is nothing hid, except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret, except to come to light’ (Mark 4:22).

Jesus Christ's Parable of the Last Judgment (Matt.25:31-46) indicates that for many people the Judgment will become a moment of insight, recognition and conversion, while for others it may turn out to be a great disappointment and frustration. Those who were sure of their own salvation will suddenly find themselves condemned, while those who perhaps did not meet Christ in their earthly life (‘when did we see Thee?’) but were merciful towards their neighbour, will be saved. In this parable, the King does not ask people about matters of belief, doctrine and religious practice. He does not ask them whether they went to church, kept the fasts, or prayed for long time: He only asks them how they treated His ‘brethren’. The main criteria of the Judgment are therefore the acts of mercy performed or not performed by people during their earthly lives.

According to the teaching of the Church, the Last Judgment will be universal: all people will undergo it, be they believers or non-believers, Christians or non-Christians. If Christians will be judged by the Gospel's standards, pagans will be judged by the natural law which is ‘written in their hearts’ (Rom.2:15). Christians will take full responsibility for their deeds as those who ‘knew’ the will of God, while some non-Christians will be treated less strictly for they did not know God or His will. The Judgment will ‘begin with the household of the Lord’ (1 Pet.4:17), that is, with the Church and its members, and not with those who did not meet Christ nor hear the message of the Gospel.

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