

**JUDGING BOTH THE LIVING & THE DEAD**

**When the Lord came down from heaven initially, He entered the world as a helpless Babe. He promised, however, that His “second coming” would be entirely different. When He returns to us, Christ will come to pass judgment on all mankind. In the words of St. Paul: “We must all appear before the dread judgment seat of Christ.”**

**Judgment Day has been portrayed as a terrifying event. Scriptures tell us of the sudden swiftness with which Christ will return, and the stern manner in which He will deal with sinners, condemning them to a place of everlasting fire and eternal punishment. Listen, for example, to the words of the Kondakion for Meatfare Sunday: “When you will come to earth in glory, O God, all things will tremble before You. The river of fire will flow before Your judgment seat, and the books will be opened and all hidden things will be revealed.”**

**Faithful followers of Christ, however, need not fear His return! On the contrary, we should all eagerly await this blessed day, for it will afford us the opportunity to achieve our ultimate spiritual goal: to be with the Lord in His heavenly kingdom.**

**What will determine whether our Lord will invite us to “come, inherit the kingdom” or “depart, you accursed ones?” Ultimately, WE will decide our own fate with our actions during our lifetime. Have we cared for the needy? Have we helped the poor and oppressed? Have we answered the cries for assistance from those less fortunate? After all, how can we claim to love the Lord if we have not been charitable to even the least of His brethren?**

**May we all prepare for the final day every day of our life! If we live in accordance with Christ’s commandments in this world, we will certainly be with Him in the world to come.**