

Judgment

I. Particular. This takes place immediately after the death of each person and irrevocably settles the soul's salvation or damnation, even though it may have to undergo temporal punishment in [Purgatory](#).

II. General. This takes place after the final Resurrection, when the body will share in the reward or punishment of the soul, and when the righteousness of God's ways will be manifestly vindicated before all creation.

(Definitions from A Catholic Dictionary, 1951)

References in Scripture:

- "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment" Matthew 12:36
- "For God sent not his Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him. He that believeth in him is not judged. But he that doth not believe, is already judged: because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:17-18
- "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them; and they were judged every one according to their works. And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the pool of fire" Apocalypse 20:12-15
- "Therefore judge not before the time; until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise from God." 1 Corinthians 4:5
- "And take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit upon the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of man" Luke 21:34-36
- "And God indeed having winked at the times of this ignorance, now declareth unto men, that all should every where do penance. Because he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in equity, by the man whom he hath appointed; giving faith to all, by raising him up from the dead" Acts 17:30-31
- "But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief, in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence, and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth and the works which are in it, shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these things are to be dissolved, what manner of people ought you to be in holy conversation and godliness? Looking

for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord, by which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with the burning heat? Wherefore, dearly beloved, waiting for these things, be diligent that you may be found before him unspotted and blameless in peace" 2 Peter 3:10-12,14

- "And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be confounded by him at his coming" 1 John 2:28
- "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" Hebrews 9:27
- "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words: going forth out of that house or city shake off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city." Matthew 10:14-15
- "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly from temptation, but to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be tormented. And especially them who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government, audacious, self willed, they fear not to bring in sects, blaspheming" 2 Peter 2:9-10
- "For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again" Matthew 7:2
- "Grudge not, brethren, one against another, that you may not be judged. Behold the judge standeth before the door" James 5:9

Church Teaching:

- "The belief in the general judgment has prevailed at all times and in all places within the Church. It is contained as an article of faith in all the ancient creeds: "He ascended into heaven. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead" (Apostles' Creed). He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead" (Nicene Creed). "From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead, at whose coming all men must rise with their bodies and are to render an account of their deeds" (Athanasian Creed)." [1917 Catholic Encyclopedia, General Judgment](#)
- "The first takes place when each one of us departs this life; for then he is instantly placed before the judgmentseat of God, where all that he has ever done or spoken or thought during life shall be subjected to the most rigid scrutiny. This is called the particular judgment. The second occurs when on the same day and in the same place all men shall stand together before the tribunal of their Judge, that in the presence and hearing of all human beings of all times each may know his final doom and sentence. The announcement of this judgment will constitute no small part of the pain and punishment of the wicked; whereas the good and just will derive great reward and consolation from the fact that it will then appear what each one was in life. This is called the general judgment." [Catechism of Council of Trent, The Creed, Article VII](#)
- "Moreover we define that according to the general disposition of God, the souls of those who die in actual mortal sin go down into hell

immediately (mox) after death and there suffer the pain of hell. Nevertheless, on the day of judgment all men will appear with their bodies "before the judgment seat of Christ" to give an account of their personal deeds, "so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body" (2 Cor. 5.10)." [Encyclical on the Beatific Vision of God by Pope Benedict XII in 1336](#)

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Summary

Let no Catholic believe otherwise, we will all experience a particular judgment immediately after we die, and a general judgment at the end of the world. Our judgment will take into account our "every idle word", as Scripture states. Scripture and the history of Church teaching have always supported this and it is not Catholic to believe otherwise.

Q. 1371. When will Christ judge us?

A. Christ will judge us immediately after our death, and on the last day.

Q. 1372. What is the judgment called which we have to undergo immediately after death?

A. The judgment we have to undergo immediately after death is called the Particular Judgment.

Q. 1373. Where will the particular judgment be held?

A. The particular judgment will be held in the place where each person dies, and the soul will go immediately to its reward or punishment.

Q. 1374. What is the judgment called which all men have to undergo on the last day?

A. The judgment which all men have to undergo on the last day is called the General Judgment.

Q. 1375. Will the sentence given at the particular judgment be changed at the general judgment?

A. The sentence given at the particular judgment will not be changed at the general judgment, but it will be repeated and made public to all.

Q. 1376. Why does Christ judge men immediately after death?

A. Christ judges men immediately after death to reward or punish them according to their deeds.

Q. 1377. How may we daily prepare for our judgment?

A. We may daily prepare for our judgment by a good examination of conscience, in which we will discover our sins and learn to fear the punishment they deserve.

Q. 1378. What are the rewards or punishments appointed for men's souls after the Particular Judgment?

A. The rewards or punishments appointed for men's souls after the Particular Judgment are Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell.

Q. 1379. What is Hell?

A. Hell is a state to which the wicked are condemned, and in which they are deprived of the sight of God for all eternity, and are in dreadful torments.

Q. 1380. Will the damned suffer in both mind and body?

A. The damned will suffer in both mind and body, because both mind and body had a share in their sins. The mind suffers the "pain of loss" in which it is tortured by the thought of having lost God forever, and the body suffers the "pain of sense" by which it is tortured in all its members and senses.

Q. 1381. What is Purgatory?

A. Purgatory is the state in which those suffer for a time who die guilty of venial sins, or without having satisfied for the punishment due to their sins.

Q. 1382. Why is this state called Purgatory?

A. This state is called Purgatory because in it the souls are purged or purified from all their stains; and it is not, therefore, a permanent or lasting state for the soul.

Q. 1383. Are the souls in Purgatory sure of their salvation?

A. The souls in Purgatory are sure of their salvation, and they will enter heaven as soon as they are completely purified and made worthy to enjoy that presence of God which is called the Beatific Vision.

Q. 1384. Do we know what souls are in Purgatory, and how long they have to remain there?

A. We do not know what souls are in Purgatory nor how long they have to remain there; hence we continue to pray for all persons who have died apparently in the true faith and free from mortal sin. They are called the faithful departed.

Q. 1385. Can the faithful on earth help the souls in Purgatory?

A. The faithful on earth can help the souls in Purgatory by their prayers, fasts, alms, deeds; by indulgences, and by having Masses said for them.

Q. 1386. Since God loves the souls in Purgatory, why does He punish them?

A. Though God loves the souls in Purgatory, He punishes them because His holiness requires that nothing defiled may enter heaven and His justice requires that everyone be punished or rewarded according to what he deserves.

Q. 1387. If every one is judged immediately after death, what need is there of a general judgment?

A. There is need of a general judgment, though every one is judged immediately after death, that the providence of God, which, on earth, often permits the good to suffer and the wicked to prosper, may in the end appear just before all men.

Q. 1388. What is meant by "the Providence of God"?

A. By "the Providence of God" is meant the manner in which He preserves, provides for, rules and governs the world and directs all things by His infinite Will.

Q. 1389. Are there other reasons for the general judgment?

A. There are other reasons for the general judgment, and especially that Christ Our Lord may receive from the whole world the honor denied Him at His first coming, and that all may be forced to acknowledge Him their God and Redeemer.

Q. 1390. Will our bodies share in the reward or punishment of our souls?

A. Our bodies will share in the reward or punishment of our souls, because through the resurrection they will again be united to them.

Q. 1391. When will the general resurrection or rising of all the dead take place?

A. The general resurrection or rising of all the dead will take place at the general judgment, when the same bodies in which we lived on earth will come forth from the grave and be united to our souls and remain united with them forever either in heaven or in hell.

Q. 1392. In what state will the bodies of the just rise?

A. The bodies of the just will rise glorious and immortal.

Q. 1393. Will the bodies of the damned also rise?

A. The bodies of the damned will also rise, but they will be condemned to eternal punishment.

Q. 1394. Why do we show respect for the bodies of the dead?

A. We show respect for the bodies of the dead because they were the dwelling-place of the soul, the medium through which it received the Sacraments, and because they were created to occupy a place in heaven.

Q. 1395. What is Heaven?

A. Heaven is the state of everlasting life in which we see God face to face, are made like unto Him in glory, and enjoy eternal happiness.

Q. 1396. In what does the happiness in heaven consist?

A. The happiness in heaven consists in seeing the beauty of God, in knowing Him as He is, and in having every desire fully satisfied.

Q. 1397. What does St. Paul say of heaven?

A. St. Paul says of heaven, "That eye hath not seen. nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." (I. Cor. ii., 9.)

Q. 1398. Are the rewards in heaven and the punishments in hell the same for all who enter into either of these states?

A. The rewards of heaven and the punishments in hell are not the same for all who enter into either of these states, because each one's reward or punishment is in proportion to the amount of good or evil he has done in this world. But as heaven and hell are everlasting, each one will enjoy his reward or suffer his punishment forever.

Q. 1399. What words should we bear always in mind?

A. We should bear always in mind these words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul, or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then will He render to every man according to his works."

Q. 1400. Name some of the more essential religious truths we must know and believe.

A. Some of the more essential religious truths we must know and believe are:

1. That there is but one God, and He will reward the good and punish the wicked.
2. That in God there are three Divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these Divine Persons are called the Blessed Trinity.
3. That Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, became man and died for our redemption.
4. That the grace of God is necessary for our salvation.
5. That the human soul is immortal.