From Thence He Shall Come to Judge the Living and the Dead

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 February 2024

Preacher: Stephen Strong

[0:00] From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. This is our first phrase in the Apostles' Creed that is in the future tense.

Our last statement, he sits at the right hand of God, was in the present tense. And everything that came before that has been in the past tense. Now, though through its teaching, the Creed is stimulating us to consider our future.
We look to Christ's return. We look to the final judgment. And we look to our final relief. But before that, we must quickly look at some of what Kirk brought us last week.
Because the Creed statements move from one part to another in a logical fashion. We considered the ascension of Christ.
The account in Acts ends with Christ being lifted up on a cloud out of the disciples' sight. Christ did bodily ascend to heaven. And the angels accounted to the disciples that when Christ returns to the earth, he will do so bodily.
[1:18] Right now, his risen body is physically localized in heaven. Where he sits at the right hand of God the Father. He has been exalted.

He has been enthroned as king. And continually works in interceding for us. At the start of our creedal statement, we have the term tense.
Or in everyday English, from there. When was the last time you said, I will return this Amazon package from whence it came?
You don't. It's not in our everyday today language. But this thence is a vital component of our section of the creed.
It grounds us in the reality that Christ is in heaven. And he will descend from there. As the creed says, from thence.
[2:16] Christ, our Lord, will return from heaven in glory. We will work through our passage in John 5, looking at three points this evening. First, why judgment?

Second, who judges? And finally, who will be judged? Why judgment? Who judges? And who will be judged?
But before we continue, let's pray to God for our help. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for the Apostles' Creed. We thank you that you helped these men consider the true divine word of God. And make it accessible for every man to understand. We pray that you will be our guide and our teacher.
We pray that the Holy Spirit changes us tonight. That we come with anticipation for a God that does great things. We pray that everything we do here will be for your glory.
[3:28] In Jesus Christ's name, amen. Why judgment? Is judgment even necessary? It seems a bit harsh, right?

In a world where words like discipline and punishment no longer exist in our school systems and are replaced with terms like restorative conversations and unlimited inclusion, it's no wonder the concept of judgment seems harsh and unpalatable.
Can we not just all be loving and get along? Tell that to a mother who's had her son taken from her by violence.
Or a woman who's scared to walk the streets alone at night because of an incident that happened to her. We cry out for justice in the face of such injustices.
Is justice a bad thing? Absolutely not. Justice is absolutely necessary. What is the answer to why judgment?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-18 08:52:15

[4:46] Final justice. Final justice. Sin. The breaking of God's law will be dealt with finally. All sin will be totally destroyed.

Totally wiped away. Yes, Christ on the cross has already won victory over sin and death. But we are looking to the final judgment where Christ himself will fully and totally deal with all the sin that we still see around us day to day.
The truth was declared in our call to worship. Let all creation rejoice before the Lord for he comes. He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.
God is holy. So it comes as no surprise that in the new heavens and in the new earth, the territorial advantages that sin has found on this earth will be reversed in full.
What is unimaginable to us here and now is a world without sin and the sadness that that sin creates. But that is the future.
[6:03] That is our sure hope. In this final justice, all sin will be judged. All sin. All sin. Every single sin.

All sin will be exposed. Then we as individuals fall into two camps. Those who believe in Christ and follow him, meaning he has dealt already with our individual sins by willingly dying on the cross for us, taking the full wrath of God's anger towards sin, leading us to forever be able to live in joy.
Or we do not believe and trust in Christ. And then we will be judged on our actions and we will be found wanting.
And the sentence will carry eternal pain and eternal sadness. Those are the two camps that will be revealed on the day of judgment.
It's stark, but it's true. All will be judged either to eternal life or to eternal death. Who judges?
[7:20] Our second point. Who judges? What does our passage say? Let's look at verse 27. And he has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the son of man.

The son of man. Jesus Christ is the one who will judge because he is the son of God. Do you ever have a conversation with a friend where you spend five or ten minutes having some vaguely interesting information and then they finally come out with something astounding or shocking?
You might say, why did you bury the lead? John. John, the gospel writer, when writing his gospel, never buries the lead.
In our passage, which is very close to the start of his gospel, John puts front and center the most striking pieces of information relating to how Jesus said he is coming back and he will judge everyone and those who trust in him will survive his judgment.
Rather than burying the lead, John is almost blurting out the most important information, the most life-changing information he has about Jesus as quickly as he can so that the people who hear or read his account, they can hear and respond to that good news with the same haste that they heard it.
[8:52] Let's look at two aspects of Christ as judge. His authority and his justice. His authority. Christ has authority to judge.

We often spend our time considering Christ as saviour because he carried out the mission of salvation on the cross, single-handedly winning the war over sin and death.
However, to have this mind where we think about Christ only in this sense, we're thinking in a single-faceted way. And we do our Lord a disservice.
One of the things Colin, our minister here, has passed on to me, and you've heard him say it from this pulpit, is the teaching of Donald MacLeod. Preach a big Christ.
He is not only our saviour, but he is our teacher. He is our great example. He is our king who is enthroned at the highest place and has been given a name above all names.
[9:56] He is a servant, yet he is the second member of the Godhead. With all the glory and honour that comes with that. He is our friend. He is the second and better Adam.

He is a priest. He is a prophet. He is a sustainer of all things. He is our advocate, advocating for us at God's right hand.
He and the Father is a sender of the Spirit. And he is God. Let us remind ourselves what the Jewish authorities' number one complaint about Jesus was.
It was that he was a blasphemer. Whenever he spoke of forgiving sins or claiming to be divine, they went into an uproar. If BBC Verify were around at the time of Jesus' doing one of their surveys about what the religious leaders' issues were, this blasphemy would outstrip Jesus' propensity to

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-18 08:52:15

spend time with sinners in sinful places.
But in our text today, Christ once again would cause outrage by calling himself the Son of Man. You may think that the Son of Man sounds like a title that's identifying Christ with us, which it does, but it also identifies Christ with God.
[11:32] Daniel, in his vision in chapter 7, verse 13, states, And behold, with the clouds of heaven, there came one like the Son of Man.

And he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away. And his kingdom, one that shall not be destroyed. Christ states that because he is the Son of Man who is divine, he has authority.
But as I acknowledged in the Daniel passage, the Son of Man is also human. Christ had the entire experience of being human, yet not sinning.
D.A. Carson, when reflecting on Christ's divinity and humanity, said, It's the combination of these factors that make him uniquely qualified to judge.
[12:45] It is the combination of his humanity and divinity that make him uniquely qualified to judge. Christ, the Son of Man, human and divine, has authority to judge.

He has authority. His justice. So Christ has the authority to judge. But is he a just judge?
We live in a world filled with unjust justices. It takes only a few seconds to do a Google search to find judges that have been sacked for gross misconduct.
We crave a judge who is just. What does Christ say about himself in our passage? Verse 30. As I hear, I judge.
And my judgment is just because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me. Christ derives his just verdicts and the unity he has with the Father, who in himself is always just.
[13:54] In Revelation 19, John has a vision of Christ. Then I saw the heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and is righteous, and in righteousness he judges.

We are assured that we not only have a judge in Christ who has all authority, but also one who in every one of his judgments is just. Anyone who has a shred of humanity needs to hear this truth.
Our world is so disconcertingly awful. Injustice is rampant. Powerful leaders seem to revel in causing harm that results in a world full of poverty and war.
People are downtrodden. Is this all we have? This world with its horrors? With all of its injustices?
No, because Christ is coming back, and he has all authority to judge, and is just in all of his judgments.
Who judges? Christ, the authoritative just judge. Who will be judged? Our third point. Who will be judged?
[15:20] So to whom does Christ's judgment pertain? All people. Verse 28 of our passage. An hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out.

Those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. Everyone will be judged.
This is a judgment that is universal in the sense that all who live and all who have ever lived will be judged. We still have almost a subconscious, national subconscious memory of hellstone brimstone preaching and the problems that that did create.
Too often preachers would just seem angry, almost hateful towards sinners. Too often the preaching style would not be balanced with a love towards those that are hell-bound.
Had the preachers themselves forgotten that they too were bound for hell apart from the grace of God? In reaction to this preaching, we can often fall into the error of avoiding this part of Jesus' teaching in its entirety.
[16:41] Albert Moeller, when speaking about this phrase in the Apostles' Creed, says, we're living in a day in which many people are trying to air-condition hell.

Christ, whom we have established, is coming back from heaven as promised with the authority to judge which he will do justly. He is the primary teacher of the doctrine of hell.
Matthew 13.50 Hell is a furnace of conscious torment where the fire never goes out. Matthew 25.30 It is a place of outer darkness where weeping and gnashing of teeth is all that will be heard.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-18 08:52:15

Mark 9.48 It is a place of excruciating misery where the worm does not die and the fire will never be quenched.
Luke 16.24 Hell is a place of agonizing thirst that can never be quenched. Christ, Christ does not air-condition hell.
[17:59] Moeller also said, if we flinch from speaking about the wrath of God, we can never speak honestly about the love of God. If we flinch from speaking about the wrath of God, we can never speak honestly about the love of God.

Let's look at that judgment and what it looks like for those who have done evil and those who have done good. Reading again, verses 28 and 29. Do not marvel at this.
For an hour is coming when all are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.
Those who have done evil first. I'm a good person. I don't break the law.
I'm kind to my neighbors. I give to charity. Importantly, I am loyal. I even have a gym membership. I am a good person.
[19:10] This is often the mindset of most people. If there is heaven, I am certainly going. Jesus himself, as we've just read, said, the good go to heaven.

Sorted. That's me. After all, I'm good. I have done good, not evil. However, how does Jesus define goodness and evil?
John 3, 18. Whoever believes in him, Christ, is not condemned, has done good.
But whoever does not believe, stands condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. Not believed, has done evil.
Christ is clear. The only way to have done good is to believe and follow him. That's it. That is the how-to guide to being good.
[20:17] It is through believing in him that we get his goodness. The only way to be good and to be seen by God as good is to believe in Jesus Christ.

Because when we do that, he sees Christ's goodness in us. Remember Kirk's point on the atonement from last week? Christ intercedes for us by holding up his pierced hands for those who believe in Christ.
His goodness is our goodness. What is the good that leads to life? Believing in Jesus. But what is the evil that leads to judgment?
To hear about Christ. The offer of grace, peace, and life, and to reject him. That's the reverse. That's the evil we're considering here.
Not believing in Christ. It matters because this choice defines your eternal reality. Your actual eternity.
[21:25] Not just the next five to ten years, but your eternity. be utterly wrong of me to be given this phrase of the creed and not compel those who sit in this church now and that are watching online who do not believe in Christ Jesus to tell them that they need Christ and they must do, they must believe in Christ and they must respond to the offer of grace.

we're not talking about mere trivialities here, but true realities. We're not talking about trivialities, but eternal realities.
Verse 29, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. I could try and paint word pictures about hell, the seriousness of it, the fact that it's more frightful than anything we could ever imagine, but Christ has already explicitly shown us the reality of hell in the passages I highlighted from Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
If you're not a Christian, that is your current destination. I fear for you. Do you fear for yourself? Honestly, do you want to be included in the resurrection of judgment?
If the answer is no, there is still hope that your destination can be heaven instead of hell. Jesus' call for belief in him is explicit.
[23:06] Prior to Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, he spoke these truthful and hopeful words to Martha about the destination of those who believe in him.

John 11, 25 and 26. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.
And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? Christ? As Jesus asked Martha to respond, he is asking us to respond.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-18 08:52:15

Do you believe in Christ? There will not always be endless opportunities to change your destination. If you die not trusting Christ, that's it.
Time has run out. Christ could return before our benediction this evening. time will one day run out for each of us. Trust in Christ now.
[24:16] Who will be resurrected to judgment? Those who have done evil, and that is those who have not believed in Christ.

Those who have done good, our second subheading, those who are resurrected to life, those who have done good. As we've just considered, people in the world often see themselves as good, and that is a problem.
On the other side, Christians often see themselves as utterly bad. That's understandable. We've learned about the fall and sin and how depraved we are.
However, if we have this inward assessment, which is important to do, but without looking to Christ, who has comprehensively dealt with our sin problem, we become unbalanced, depressed, and we dampen our hope.
We must see our sins, but we must also see our saviour. and we must fully trust that when we believe in Christ, which we have said is our how-to guide to being saved, that Christ actually does save, and that we truly do get his goodness applied to our account.
[25:39] This is doing good, what Jesus was speaking of. We must believe in Christ's salvation, and that it truly does work. Verses 28 and 29 from our passage.

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming, when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out. Those who have done good to the resurrection of life.
Those who have done good is not a doctrine of salvation by works as we just reflected. The only thing we do for salvation is to believe in Christ, the only one who is good.
John 10 11, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. As we close, we must briefly consider two elements.
First, resurrection to life for us, and then second, how we respond to our hell-bound neighbors. We see some glorious pictures in Revelation 21 with imagery of jewels and a gold city that needs no sun or moon because for the glory of God gives its light.
[26:50] Its light is the lamb. The glory of heaven is not its infrastructure, though it is cornerstone. It is Christ.

Christ prays in John 17, Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you love me before the foundation of the world.
Jesus' desire is for us to be with him. I'll let that sink in. Jesus' desire is for us to be with him.
Our Lord, Savior, and Judge wants us to reside with him. Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere.
This is our hope, our end. It is Christ to be with him. But that is not everyone's hope, it's ours, but we know so many who are hell-bent.
[27:57] Do you ever see the lights of a city from a plane or from a distant road and think, how many are lost? What should we do?

Paul in Romans 9 verses 1 through 3 models the grief we should have over the lost. Paul says, I am speaking the truth in Christ.
I am not lying. My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart, for I wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.
He mourned over the Jewish nation. No wonder in every city in which he entered, he went and preached in the synagogue. We have heard what Christ said about the hell-bound.
will we be passive when we watch a world heading towards damnation? They do not see that they are hanging off by their fingernails in eternal danger of a cliff.
[29:15] The danger that they face is not just some stony ravine, but it's danger of falling into eternal fire. So often we do not share our faith through fear of mocking.

Would we watch a child get hit by a bus rather than intervene so that we do not get mocked for the way that we run? Those who do not share in Christ are in as much danger.
No, they are in more danger than a child with a bus careering towards them out of control. We have been given a commission by our Lord.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-18 08:52:15

We must see it through. My final molar quote of the evening. God will use us to snatch some from the evil one.
God will use us to snatch some from the evil one. Let us strain with every opportunity we are given to share the amazing truth of Christ.
[30:19] We have received this by grace. Let us share this hope with our friends, neighbours, and work colleagues. Let us boldly pray for opportunities because opportunities themselves can be scary.

To be provided that we share our belief in Christ and pray then for our boldness as we speak that truth in love. Can you imagine for a moment the magnitude if you had a conversation with a friend or neighbour that you weren't planning on having before tonight?
That conversation changed their eternal destiny. We see Christ as returning. Maybe tonight, maybe tomorrow, we do not know, we will never know, we are not to waste our time worrying about such things.
But what we do need to know is that we need to trust in Christ, believe in Christ for our eternal destiny. Why judgment?
For final justice over sin, to wipe away the sin problem in its entirety. Christ is coming from heaven on a cloud of glory as he and the angels promised he would.
[31:38] He has all authority to judge and he will judge justly. there will be a final judgment for all people to either the resurrection of life or to the resurrection of judgment.

Let all those who are listening here tonight be numbered among those who Christ prays for, all those who are his, to be with him forever.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-05-18 08:52:15