**Daniel 7:9-10** "As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. 10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

Yep, it is the Sunday of Last Judgement. Now I am gathering that because of the name of this Sunday you can pretty well guess what the theme and idea of this Sunday of readings is all about. Yes, it is about the Last Judgement, the Day of Judgement that the Lord our God says is coming!

So do you think they had any idea that it was their Last Judgement? They got up and got ready, drove to church in anticipation of worship and praise. No doubt a few of them expected to go out for lunch or to go to a family member’s home for a noon meal. But as they sat and worshipped, evil raised its ugly and hateful head. A gunman came in and 26 died that morning. 26 people gathered for worship much the same as you and I are gathered today. So do you think they had any idea, until that gunman walked in blazing away, that that day was their last?

My guess is that no one gave it any thought that today might be their last day or that today they would stand before the throne of God to hear his verdict. Did you give it thought today? Well, maybe you should. Maybe you need to ask that rather simple and important question that I learned many years ago: “If you were to die today, where would you be?” Would you be on the right or on the left of the Lord our God? Will you be at peace and filled with joy and wonder at the goodness and awe of God’s Eternal kingdom or will you find yourself in a place of darkness and terror, the place that Scripture describes as: **“where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.”** Where will you be and on what do you base your answer?

Those are all pertinent questions to consider today. Our theme: **THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.**

The first thing I want to get across to you is the simple fact that each one of us is going to face the judgment of God. That judgment is coming upon you when you leave this world and enter into the eternal and spiritual realm of the Lord God. Your last day may come upon you as you sleep. It may happen to you as you are driving, as you watch TV or as you are preparing or eating your supper. In other words, I need you to grasp that each of us will face a personal day of judgment and we do not know when that will be. We will be called before God. We will be before the throne of God on the very day that we die and enter into God’s realm. That’s what the Word of God says. Now you can believe what you want to: believe the lies of this dark world, believe in reincarnation, believe in purgatory or limbo. Believe that none of this is going to be, believe that there is death and then no more, but you will be wrong! For the Lord tells us point blank in Hebrews 9:27-28, **“Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.”** We are destined to die once and then to face judgment. So recognize that your judgment is coming when we die or it is coming when Jesus returns again. That’s the Word of the Lord.

Now when you face that judgment what will you see? I think Daniel gives us a great picture of what will be. Even in the Old Testament God sent word about the last and great Day of Judgment. It will be an awesome sight. It will be the Lord God arrayed in all his might and majesty with his holiness and purity clearly understood, his power and divine right to be the judge clearly known. And it is also clear that the Lord will know all. **“The books”** that were opened in Daniel, those I believe are the records of our life. God will know everything. Every act, every thought, every desire, every wrong and horror will be a part of the knowledge of God. Do you think you will argue with him? Do you think you will be able to convince him that you and your life has been so holy and perfect that He must let you in? Then you are a fool! **“Our righteous acts are filthy rags.” “There is no one, not even one who does good.” “For all far short of the glory of God.”** On our own and without the gift of faith, we are doomed, doomed to the damnation of hell.

Then how, how shall we find the comfort of God? That was revealed in the Gospel reading. There we are given a picture of the Son of Man, Jesus himself on the throne of God, yes, the very same throne and God pictured in Daniel. And we are told that Jesus will separate the people one from another. The sheep on his right and the goats on his left. And Jesus the King will say, **“Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”** Everything you need to know is already revealed in those words and yet people get all caught up and focused on feeding the poor and hungry, giving water to the thirsty and visiting the sick and prisoners. Let me explain what I mean.

Why are you found on the right? Why are you a sheep? Jesus says it is because you **“are blessed by his Father.”** Now how has God the Father blessed us? In truth is was by the promises of and the sending of his Son Jesus. Even our Catechism tells us that the blessings of God are: a. that God offers and gives the forgiveness of sins, b. That God offers and gives deliverance from the power of death and the devil. C, that God offers and gives eternal life and salvation. All of these are blessings of and from Jesus. Jesus came to bring them to you. Jesus is the reason you have them. In other words, apart from Jesus you have nothing and are a goat, standing there with your filthy rag acts, far short of God’s glory. But with Jesus you are blessed by God the Father.

Do you doubt this passage is a reference to Jesus? Take the next line and let its full glory sink in: “**Take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”** You have an inheritance in the kingdom of God, an inheritance that was prepared since the very creation of the world. As God laid forth his plans in this world, He knew you. He knew He would bless you. He knew you would believe in His Son. He knew you would serve Him as a new creature created to do what was good. In other words, all your works, all your deeds even before you did them were planned and given you by God! Those good deeds are only your faith in action as God ordained it. Gifts and blessings from God! How? Because of your inheritance!

Please, think of what an inheritance is. It is what becomes yours after someone dies and leaves it to you. Jesus died and left his righteousness for you. He died and paid for your sins. That was the whole purpose of Jesus, to take upon himself the righteous and just wrath of God for your sins and mine. To wipe the slate clean just for the sake of Jesus. We inherit from Jesus. We get his perfection and holiness counted on our behalf. In Jesus God the Father sees us blessed, holy and righteous in Jesus and God’s kingdom becomes ours.

Now in this world of ours, last wills and testaments are usually administered by others appointed for the task because the maker of the will has died. Not the last will and testament of Jesus. Jesus has risen from the dead. Jesus returned to life and now Jesus administers His own will on our behalf. He knows what he left us. He knows those who are his because He made them so. He knows who goes on the right and who on the left because it is all about Him and what He has done. When you receive the gift He has given, it is to his credit and glory. When you reject his gift to you, it is counted your fault and damnation. In other words, everything is always in Jesus. The sheep hear the voice of Jesus and do his will. The sheep follow, eating the green pastures and drinking of the still waters. The sheep feast because the banquet has been given them and not because they earned or deserved it. The sheep grasp the last will and testament of Jesus because that’s what God’s blessed sheep will do. It is a part of the new life that believers are given in the Holy Spirit, a new life that want to please the Lord God.

So on that day when you will meet Jesus, what a marvel and joy it will be because of Jesus. If you are called from this life by death, you will see and be with Jesus because that is His promise and the whole point of his work. But if you are still alive when the final and Last Day of Judgment takes place, then here is what will be.

You will be just doing the things of your life. But you will not be like the world enshrouded in darkness. A darkness so deep that they don’t even grasp that the baby is soon to come! Think of that line of our text. Do you really think a pregnant woman has no idea when the labor pains are coming? Yet that is how the unbelievers of the world will be. They can’t see, can’t understand because of the spiritual darkness and death they are in.

But you, you are not in darkness, this day will not be a shock and surprise to you. You will be expecting this day. You will hear that trumpet sound that will pierce the entire universe, the sound that heralds the Lord’s Day. You will look up, for this is what the Word reveals, and you will see Jesus coming on the clouds, with all the previous believers coming with him. In an instance, in the twinkling of an eye, this world will dissolve and you will be with the Lord in the air (where else could you be with a dissolved world and how else but a dissolved world could it be that every human will see and witness the coming of Jesus?) From that point on you will be with Jesus. As our Epistle said: **“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ…Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.”**

There is our hope and comfort. The message of Jesus and the forgiveness of sins he has died and rose for. Forgiveness that is ours in Jesus. Salvation given in Jesus. Eternal life given in Jesus. Because of this truth of Jesus, this hope and wonder of God’s Son as our Savior, we have no fear and no worry for when that judgment day of God arrives. Should God come and call anyone of us home today or tomorrow or next week or next month or whenever, we have the comfort of knowing that our death is but the gateway to his eternal kingdom and His forever peace. Such is the promise of the Lord.

And should we be around until that trumpet sounds and we see Jesus coming, there is nothing to fear. For still we have the wonder and salvation of Jesus as ours. Should this whole world melt, the sun and moon go dark, the mountains quake and fall into the sea, we do not despair. For God is with us. He is our fortress and our great reward. He is in charge of all. He is bringing us home to be with him forever. Rejoice then and know, that in Jesus all is secure and the last day, yes, even our last day, is but the victory of the Lord finally delivered to us. Thank you Lord for the wonder of Jesus. May our faith be such that every day we are prepared for the Lord through faith! Prepared because you sent your Son and the Holy Spirit that we might believe what your Son has done. He has granted us life through faith. He sustains our life, the true life, our eternal life by the means of grace, the gospel in Word and Sacrament. The Father in Jesus blesses us with all that is necessary for our salvation, the salvation prepared before the creation of the world. Thank you for the encouragement of these words. Amen.