



**JESUS CHRIST**  
*He will come again in glory*  
**Texts from the**  
*Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**CHRIST IS LORD OF THE COSMOS AND OF HISTORY**

***In him human history and all creation are transcendently fulfilled***

“Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living” (Rom 14:9) Christ's Ascension into heaven signifies his participation, in his humanity, in God's power and authority. Jesus Christ is Lord: he possesses all power in heaven and on earth. He is “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion”, for the Father “has put all things under his feet” (Eph 1:20-22) Christ is Lord of the cosmos and of history. In him human history and indeed all creation are ‘set forth’ and transcendently fulfilled (Eph 1:10). (668)

***Christ dwells on earth in his Church***

As Lord, Christ is also head of the Church, which is his Body. Taken up to heaven and glorified after he had thus fully accomplished his mission, Christ dwells on earth in his Church. The redemption is the source of the authority that Christ, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, exercises over the Church. “The kingdom of Christ [is] already present in mystery”, “on earth, the seed and the beginning of the kingdom” (Vatican II, The Church) (669)

***Since the Ascension we are now in ‘the last hour’***

Since the Ascension God's plan has entered into its fulfilment. We are already at “the last hour” (1 Jn 2:18). “Already the final age of the world is with us, and the renewal of the world is irrevocably under way; it is even now anticipated in a certain real way, for the Church on earth is endowed already with a sanctity that is real but imperfect” (Vatican II, The Church). Christ's kingdom already manifests its presence through the miraculous signs that attend its proclamation by the Church. (670)

***We wait for the return of Christ ‘with great power and great glory’***

Though already present in his Church, Christ's reign is nevertheless yet to be fulfilled “with power and great glory” by the king's return to earth (Lk 21:27). This reign is still under attack by the evil powers, even though they have been defeated definitively by Christ's Passover. Until everything is subject to him, “until there be realised new heavens and a new earth in which justice dwells, the pilgrim Church, in her sacraments and institutions, which belong to this present age, carries the mark of this world which will pass, and she herself takes her place among the creatures which groan and travail yet and await the revelation of the sons of God” (Vatican II, The Church) That is why Christians pray, above all in the Eucharist, to hasten Christ's return by saying to him: *Marana tha!* “Our Lord, come!” (Rev 22:17; 20) (671)

***This is a time of a trial of evil, and a time of watching and waiting***

Before his Ascension Christ affirmed that the hour had not yet come for the glorious establishment of the messianic kingdom awaited by Israel which, according to the prophets, was to bring all men the definitive order of justice, love and peace. According to the Lord, the present time is the time of the Spirit and of witness, but also a time still marked by ‘distress’ and the trial of evil which does not spare the Church and ushers in the struggles of the last days. It is a time of waiting and watching. (672)

***The glorious advent of Christ, the hope of Israel***

Since the Ascension Christ's coming in glory has been imminent, even though “it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority” (Acts 1:7). This eschatological coming could be accomplished at any moment, even if both it and the final trial that will precede it are ‘delayed’. (673)

***At the end - the full inclusion of the Jews into Christ and ‘God will be all in all’***

The glorious Messiah's coming is suspended at every moment of history until his recognition by “all Israel”, for “a hardening has come upon part of Israel” in their “unbelief” toward Jesus (Rom 11:12, 25). St. Peter says to the Jews of Jerusalem after Pentecost: “Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old” (Acts 3:19-21). St. Paul echoes him: “For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?” (Rom 11:15) The “full inclusion” of the Jews in the Messiah's salvation, in the wake of “the full number of the Gentiles”, will enable the People of God to achieve “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”, in which “God may be all in all” (Rom 11:12; Eph 4:13; 1 Cor 15:28) (674)

### ***The Church's ultimate trial - the coming of the Antichrist***

Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers. The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth will unveil the 'mystery of iniquity' in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh. (675)

### ***The Church's final Passover***

The Church will enter the glory of the kingdom only through this final Passover, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection. The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but only by God's victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause his Bride to come down from heaven. God's triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgement after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world. (677)

## **HE WILL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD**

### ***Jesus announced the Last Day in his preaching***

Following in the steps of the prophets and John the Baptist, Jesus announced the judgement of the Last Day in his preaching. Then will the conduct of each one and the secrets of hearts be brought to light. Then will the culpable unbelief that counted the offer of God's grace as nothing be condemned. Our attitude about our neighbour will disclose acceptance or refusal of grace and divine love. On the last day Jesus will say: "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40) (678)

### ***The Father has given 'all judgement to the Son'***

Christ is Lord of eternal life. Full right to pass definitive judgement on the works and hearts of men belongs to him as redeemer of the world. He "acquired" this right by his cross. The Father has given "all judgement to the Son" (Jn 5:22). Yet the Son did not come to judge, but to save and to give the life he has in himself. By rejecting grace in this life, one already judges oneself, receives according to one's works, and can even condemn oneself for all eternity by rejecting the Spirit of love. (679)

### ***God's Providence guides everything to its final end in Christ***

The Last Judgement will come when Christ returns in glory. Only the Father knows the day and the hour; only he determines the moment of its coming. Then through his Son Jesus Christ he will pronounce the final word on all history. We shall know the ultimate meaning of the whole work of creation and of the entire economy of salvation, and understand the marvellous ways by which his Providence led everything towards its final end. The Last Judgement will reveal that God's justice triumphs over all the injustices committed by his creatures and that God's love is stronger than death. (1040)

### ***The blessed hope of the Lord's return***

The message of the Last Judgement calls men to conversion while God is still giving them "the acceptable time,... the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2). It inspires a holy fear of God and commits them to the justice of the Kingdom of God. It proclaims the "blessed hope" of the Lord's return, when he will come "to be glorified in his saints, and to be marvelled at in all who have believed" (Titus 2:13; 2 Th 1:10) (1041)

### ***A new heaven and a new earth***

At the end of time, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness. After the universal judgement, the righteous will reign for ever with Christ, glorified in body and soul. The universe itself will be renewed. Sacred Scripture calls this mysterious renewal, which will transform humanity and the world, "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Pt 3:13). It will be the definitive realisation of God's plan to bring under a single head "all things in [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph 1:10) (1042, 1043)

## **IN BRIEF**

- **Christ the Lord already reigns through the Church, but all the things of this world are not yet subjected to him. The triumph of Christ's kingdom will not come about without one last assault by the powers of evil. (680)**
- **On Judgement Day at the end of the world, Christ will come in glory to achieve the definitive triumph of good over evil which, like the wheat and the tares, have grown up together in the course of history. (681)**
- **When he comes at the end of time to judge the living and the dead, the glorious Christ will reveal the secret disposition of hearts and will render to each man according to his works, and according to his acceptance or refusal of grace. (682)**
- **At the end of time, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness. Then the just will reign with Christ for ever, glorified in body and soul, and the material universe itself will be transformed. God will then be "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28), in eternal life. (1060)**

