

Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov: Judgment According to the Commandments of the Gospel [Toll-houses]



St. Ignatius Brianchaninov, Bishop of the Caucasus and Black Sea (AD 1807-1867), Igumen of St. Sergius Monastery in St. Petersburg, hierarch, and a prolific author.

Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, **The Arena: And Offering to Contemporary Monasticism**, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, NY, 1991, pp. 6-7.

Chapter 2

PEOPLE WILL BE JUDGED AT GOD'S JUDGMENT ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE GOSPEL

We shall be judged according to the commandments of the Gospel at that judgment which God has appointed for us Orthodox Christians and on which depends our eternal destiny. The judgment is private for every Christian immediately after his death, and it will be general for all men at our Lord Jesus Christ's second coming to earth. At both judgments God Himself is present and judges. At the private judgment He judges by means of angels of light and fallen angels; at the general judgment He judges by means of His incarnate Word. The reason of this

different form of judgment is obvious. Man submitted to his fallen angel voluntarily. Consequently he must first settle his account with the fallen angel according to the extent to which fellowship with the rejected spirit has been broken by the Christian with the help of redemption. At the general judgment both the fallen spirits and the people seduced by them must stand for trial as those who have sinned before the Divine Majesty. Therefore God Himself, God the Word Himself Who took upon Himself humanity, by Whom our redemption was accomplished and by Whom all the fallen must be saved, will judge all of us who have fallen and who have not purified ourselves by repentance. The codex or collection of laws by which we shall be tried and on the basis of which sentence will be pronounced at both judgments is the Gospel.

The Lord said:

He who rejects Me and does not accept My words has his judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge at the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority, but the Father Who sent Me has Himself given Me commandment what to say and what to tell And I know that His commandment is eternal life. [Matt 23:31-46, John 5: 22-27].

From these words of the Lord it is evident that we shall be judged by the Gospel, and that negligence in carrying out the commands of the Gospel is an actual rejection of the Lord Himself.

Let us take all care, brothers, to become doers of the commandments of the Gospel. When death will come is unknown. We may be suddenly called to judgment when we are least expecting it. Blessed are those who have prepared themselves for their passage to eternity by a life in accordance with the Gospel! Woe to the easy-going, the careless, the self-willed, the self-opinionated! Woe to those who have not broken fellowship with satan! Woe to those who have not entered into fellowship with God! Greater woe to those who have entered into fellowship with God, and then abandoned it!