

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sistine Chapel - Cardinals gather to elect Pope

Terrifying picture - Last Judgment by Michelangelo

Imposing figure of Jesus dividing the good from the wicked: no-one looking happy

Picture intended to be taken seriously: even Popes and Cardinals will have to give an account of themselves

### **A) END OF THE WORLD**

Jesus spoke of the **end of the world**: cosmic disturbances, a time of distress, the darkening of the sun and the moon, stars falling from heaven, and so on.

In other gospels, he speaks of natural disasters within the world, like famine and earthquake, man-made disasters such as great wars. People have tried to work out when the world will end: they apply those images from the gospel to what is going on in the contemporary world.

But the truth is, **we don't know when the world will end**

### **B) SECOND COMING OF JESUS**

Creed: "**(Jesus Christ) will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**"

Again, we have no idea what the General Judgment will be like.

When people wrote about it or spoke about it they used imagery and poetic language. Michaelangelo's painting reflects that.

Jesus himself often spoke about his Second Coming and the General Judgment: parable of the sheep and the goats: did we recognise Jesus in our neighbour **and show our love for them?**

The General Judgment will take place at the end of time, at the end of the world.

Not only will the particular deeds of individuals be revealed but also their consequences both bad and good: the bigger picture  
Not all bad news: we will be pleasantly surprised, delighted, astonished at the good effects of our good deeds.

### **C) PARTICULAR JUDGEMENT**

There is another judgement that comes before the end of the world: the one we each face at the end of our lives.

There too we will see, more clearly than ever, how we have lived and how we have loved.

How do we view that event?

I am quite sure that there are many people who don't like to think about it too much.

Some people, especially as they grow older can think about such things with fear and dread: of course, a great pity

But there are others who genuinely long for God and look forward to being with him and with those they have loved

St T More: He will not turn away one who is so blithe to go to him  
pray for me and I will for thee that we may merrily meet in heaven

### **D) LOVE IS THE BE ALL AND END ALL**

The people who look forward to meeting God are those who are motivated by love

They are acutely conscious of his love for them, and respond to it in their turn

**God the Father** has created each one of us out of love: in his own image; will he want to destroy his creation?

**God the Son** became man, suffered and died for each one of us, out of love: would he go through all of that in order to turn us away at the last minute?

**God the Holy Spirit**, the love of God Himself, has been poured into our hearts, to draw us ever closer to him: would he choose to waste his gifts?

True that we are free to turn our backs on him

But if we are trying to love him and love one another, then His grace, his compassion, his mercy are always there to help us.

He will give us everything we need in order to come to him.

He will not play tricks on us; he will not let us down

T More: He will not turn away one who is so blithe to go to him.