

THY WORD IS TRUTH

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

In all our study of God's Word we shall find no subject which can be of greater interest to the Church, nor one of which it is more important that our understanding be correct, than the subject of Our Lord's Return, the "Second Coming," of which He assured His disciples in

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:3.)

Which promise was repeated by the Angels.

Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11.)

Three Greek words are used in reference to our Lord's return:

1. Parousia, which signifies presence.
2. Epiphania, which signifies bright shining or manifestation.
3. Apokalupsis, which signifies revealment, uncovering, unveiling (as of a thing previously present, but hidden).

If we keep in mind the different shades of meaning these words express, and give to each its proper significance in the texts where

it is used, we shall get a much clearer view of the entire subject.

With this thought we give the following groups of texts.

In each of the following texts, the word “coming” is translated from the Greek “Parousia.”

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (Matt. 24:3.)

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (Matt. 24:27.)

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (Matt. 24:37.)

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (Matt. 24:39.)

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. (1 Cor. 15:23.)

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? (1 Thess. 2:19.)

To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. (1 Thess. 3:13.)

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 5:23.)

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, (2 Thess. 2:1.)

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. ... Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. (James 5:7,8.)

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (1 Thess. 4:15.)

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (2 Pet. 3:3,4.)

In the two following texts the word “Parousia” is translated “presence,” which is its correct rendering, and should have been used in all the preceding texts.

For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. (2 Cor. 10:10.)

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (Phil. 2:12.)

The following texts have the word “appearing” used in reference to our Lord’s return, and translated from the Greek “Epiphania.”

That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: (1 Tim. 6:14.)

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; (2 Tim. 4:1.)

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (2 Tim. 4:8.)

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (Titus 2:13.)

In this text we have both words, “Parousia,” translated “coming,” and “Epiphania,” translated “brightness.”

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: (2 Thess. 2:8.)

If “Parousia” were given its correct rendering (presence) the text would read, “shall destroy by the brightness of his presence.”

Apokalupsis is rendered revealed, revelation, appearing, coming and manifestation, in the following texts which relate to the Lord’s second presence and power and glory, as these shall be made known, — uncovered or revealed to the world. Many of these texts also show that when he shall thus be revealed, his Church will be with the Lord and be revealed or manifested at the same time and in the same manner.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom. 8:18.)

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1 Pet. 4:13.)

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation

ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Pet. 1:5.)

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: (1 Pet. 5:1.)

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; ... (1 Cor. 3:13.)

Here the reference evidently is to the testings of the Lord's people during the period of his presence in the end of the age. The Apostle's words thus agree with our Lord's prophecy of the same testings, saying that "...there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed" — uncovered. (Matt. 10:26.)

For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. (Luke 12:2.)

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (1 Pet. 1:13.)

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, (2 Thess. 1:7.)

So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: (1 Cor. 1:7.)

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (1 Pet. 1:7.)

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. (Rom. 8:19.)

But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. (Luke 17:29,30.)

Our Lord's words in Matt. 24:36-39,

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

and Paul's words in 1 Thess. 5:1-3,

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

show that the world will not be expecting His coming, and that when it has already taken place they will not know of it. While 1 Thess. 5:4,5

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

declares that it shall not overtake the Church as a thief, and Dan. 12:8-10

And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

promises that when the time of the end comes the wise shall understand.

In Matt. 24:3

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

the disciples ask, "What shall be the sign of thy 'Parousia'?" (presence) And in Matt. 24:4-14

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earth quakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. and Luke 21:25,26,29-32

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the

sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. ... And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

Jesus answers the question, telling by what signs the Church may know that the day and hour have come and He is present. In 2 Pet. 3:3,4,

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 2 Tim. 3:1-5

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. and Mark 13:19,20

For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

we have a description of the condition in which the World and the Nominal Church will be at the time of his presence (parousia).

Our Lord, in Luke 21:36

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. and Matt. 24:42,

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. Paul, in 1 Thess. 5:6,

Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

and Peter, in 1 Pet. 4:7,

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

all tell us that the attitude of the Church should be always an attitude of watching for his coming, and of prayer that he find us watching. While in Rev. 16:15

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

John declares that a blessing awaits those who heed the injunction to “watch.”

And it is those who watch and who therefore see the signs fulfilled and the conditions prevailing as foretold, and by that know of his presence (parousia), of whom Daniel spoke when he said, “The wise shall understand.” (Dan. 12:10.)

As we study this subject, or try to explain it to others, we must not omit the texts upon which those who look for the visible coming

of our Lord chiefly rely, viz:

Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11.)

which they take to mean “Shall so come in like form as ye have seen him go.” Whereas the manner of his going was quietly, unnoticed and unknown, except by a few of his disciples.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (1 Thess. 4:16.)

Nearly all will admit that the “Trump of God” here spoken of is the same as the seventh trumpet of And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Rev. 11:15.)

It is said of all the angels to whom the seven trumpets of Revelation were given, “The first, the second, etc., angel sounded.” Now, since neither the first, second, third, fourth, fifth nor sixth trumpets have been a literal trumpet and heard by the natural ear, why do they expect the seventh will be?

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:17.)

This verse can be readily understood if compared with Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: ... (1 Cor. 15:51,52.)

Which shows that after the Lord's parousia (presence) the saints shall no longer fall asleep as during the age, but be instantly changed, at their death, to spirit beings and caught up to meet the Lord.

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. (Mark 13:26.)

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. (Rev. 1:7.)

Probably in our small space no further comment will be needed on the two verses above, than to say that in both the word see is used in the sense of perceive.