

# SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER    ISA. 55:10    FOR THE EATER  
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

## THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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### THE PAROUSIA OF THE LORD JESUS

In the prerecorded history (prophecies) of the future benevolent services which the Lord Jesus Christ will yet perform for mankind, one of the most important is that which will be accomplished in His thousand year parousia. Having established in Issue No. 23 the meaning of the Greek word *parousia*, I shall henceforth use it as an English word in the confidence that my readers will understand that by it I mean a personal presence when one is present because of who or what he is and what he does in view of this.

The great truth of the parousia of the Lord Jesus is unknown and unrecognized by most readers of the English Bible since the word is not found there. It is wrongly translated "coming" in twenty-two of its twenty-four occurrences. It is the parousia of Jesus Christ that will prepare and qualify mankind for the place he will have and the services he will perform in the new heaven and new earth. Under that new order the tabernacle of God will be with men and He will dwell with them and they will be His people and He will be their God (Rev. 21:3). Not even that long term of school in the kingdom of God will fully prepare men for this position and service. We will yet need the learning and discipline that comes from Christ being personally present because of Who He is and what He will do.

When we consider that the event which is commonly called "the rapture" is one that is related to the parousia, and which so many are saying is the next event in God's prophetic program, it causes us to realize the need for an objective study of the parousia of the Lord Jesus.

It is in Matthew 24:3 that we find the first mention of this great event. The Lord's twelve apostles came to Him privately upon the Mount of Olives and asked the question, **'What will be the sign of your parousia, even the**

## consummation of the eon?"

The eon here is the kingdom eon, that pre-advent time of divine government that prepares mankind for the parousia of Jesus Christ. The eon consummates in the parousia, and it is the consummation of that eon. In justification of the above translation I would cite the following: There is a rule of Greek grammar which is as follows. When two nouns in the same case are connected by the word *kai* (and), and the second noun lacks the definite article, then the second noun refers to the same person or thing as the first noun and is a definition of it. An example of this will be found in 1 Cor. 15:24 where Paul speaks of "**God, even the Father**" (*Theo kai patri*).

This rule applies to the two nouns found in the question asked by the apostles (*parousia* and *sunteleia*). They are asking about one thing, not two things. The parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ is the consummation of the eon - not this present evil eon, but the glorious eon of the day of Christ, that eon of divine government which is next to come upon the earth.

I am fully convinced that the word *sunteleia* means a coming together of all that is necessary to produce a desired goal or end, so I have used the word consummation to translate it. The word here is not *telos* (the actual end) but *sunteleia*, the act of completing to produce a desired result.

It will help us to fix the meaning of *sunteleia* in our minds if we will remember that the consummation of a woman's pregnancy is the birth of a living child. A child born dead would be the end of her pregnancy but it would not be the consummation of it. The goal would not have been reached.

There is nothing in this passage about the coming of Christ. How could there be when He was then present with them? The disciples' question concerns His parousia, which they further describe as being "the consummation of the eon." As said before, the eon spoken of here is the eon of the kingdom of God. The consummation of the kingdom eon is the parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, His parousia will not be ushered in without a great struggle of opposition on the part of Satan. The developments and the outcome of this struggle are set forth in the ensuing portion of Matthew 24.

In answer to their question the Lord sets forth certain significant events that will precede His parousia. They asked for the signs of it and this is what

He gives to them. These are: 1. Men coming in His character claiming they are the Anointed One, 2. Battles and reports of battles, 3. Nation rising up against nation and government against government, 4. Famines, 5. Pestilences, and 6. Earthquakes. And since these things have always been prominent in the earth from the time of the entrance of sin (they were prominent when the Lord spoke these words and have been prominent ever since) the logical mind will wonder how they can possibly be signs of the nearness of His parousia.

The answer is that they cannot be and it is illogical to cry "signs of the times" every time a famine or earthquake or pestilence occurs. However, when we understand the flow of events set forth in the time periods of the New Testament we realize that these things have ceased under God's government which precedes these events and the parousia. The rigid restraints (Isa. 30:31) and the swift punishments that will characterize the government of God will keep all such things from happening. But when these restraints are lifted and the restrainer Himself (the Holy Spirit) is removed, evil men and evil conditions will again appear and be highly significant. It should also be apparent that the great drama that is written out in detail in Matthew 24 can never be acted out until the twelve apostles have been raised from the dead and are in their positions as judges of the twelve tribes of Israel. These words and warnings were spoken to them, and not to us. Nevertheless, all readers are cautioned, "Whoso readeth, let him understand" (Matt. 24:15).

The actual period of time being dealt with here is the seventieth week, a seven year period, of Israel's seventy weeks as revealed in Daniel 9. This seven year period is divided into two parts and it is the last three and one-half years that makes up "the great tribulation." This begins the great struggle for it in the middle of the week that Satan is cast down to earth, raging with great wrath because he knows his time is short (Rev. 12:12).

It is then that all the governing people in Israel ("them which be in Judea," Matt. 24:16) must *flee* to the mountains. This will be an orderly migration, a work of faith, and the apostles will be in absolute charge. They are to take nothing, since the same Lord who fed and clothed their murmuring fathers in these same mountains for forty years can certainly supply the needs of this righteous band for forty-two months.

It is the presence of Satan, the great deceiver, upon the earth, that makes this to be a time of affliction such as has never been before. But they are safe

in their divinely appointed place in the mountains and the forces of antichrist do not dare to go in and bring them out, so they spend their time marching up and down the streets of Jerusalem. This is the time when **"Jerusalem shall be trodden of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."** See Eze. 30:2, Luke 21:24, Rev. 11:2. But it seems they begin to look foolish marching up and down the streets of Jerusalem when the ones they seek to capture and destroy are in the mountains. And it is when they assemble at Megiddo in preparation for turning into the mountains that the Lord comes and fights against them. This is the battle of Armageddon, in which not one life is lost except those who are in revolt against Israel and against God's government. Remember that the "man of sin" is destroyed by the blazing forth (*epiphaneia*) of His parousia (2 Thess. 2: 8) .

In answering their question concerning the signs of His parousia He warns them to disregard all declarations that He has returned to the earth and is in the desert or hidden away in some secret chamber in the city, thus to avoid all stratagems that would lure them out of their divinely appointed place of safety. He then states with absolute finality:

**"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the parousia of the Son of Man be."** (Matt. 24:27.)

From this we know that His parousia will be sudden, dramatic, and public. The idea of a secret parousia is unknown in the Word of God.

As the Lord continues His message He declares that it is **"immediately after the tribulation of those days"** that they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matt. 24: 29, 30).. This is the coming that results in His parousia.

One evident fact that will be apparent to all who examine the four occurrences of the word *parousia* in Matthew 24, is that it is an event that comes after the great tribulation and not before. It cannot be moved around to suit the whims of faulty prophetic schemes. It is also seen to be one definite event. Any attempt to make two *parousias* will not stand the test of Scripture.

One of the most important references to the parousia of the Lord is found in 1 Thess. 4:15-17 where Paul prefaces his declaration by saying, "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord," which indicates a new revelation not made by anyone before. He continues by saying that those who are alive and

remain unto the parousia of the Lord shall in no wise be a step ahead of those who are asleep. He declares that the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the chief messenger, and with the trump of God. This is His coming, His coming in order to be personally present. As He descends those who are then "dead in Christ," a martyred group who gave up their lives in the great tribulation, will be raised and these with the living shall be caught up with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. It is wrong to twist this into the idea that He is coming to take these people to heaven. He is coming to be personally present upon the earth and here to accomplish all the great works that His many offices indicate. He is not coming to govern. After the kingdom experience those who still need government have not acquired the maturity that is necessary for a place on earth when He is personally present in view of all that He is and all that He will do.

The words of the scoffers who ask, "**Where is the promise of His parousia?**" (2 Pet. 3:4) are tantamount to saying, "There is no promise of a parousia in the Bible." The amillennial school of interpretation is doing this today. They are a sign that we are in the closing days of this dispensation. Don't listen to them.

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