

The Coming of the Lord

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Can The Parousia (coming in person) be separated from His Epiphaneia (shining upon¹) or His Apokalupsis (His revelation)?

There are three words specially made use of by the Holy Ghost to describe the personal coming of the Lord. These words are *Parousia*, *Epiphaneia*, and *Apokalupsis*. I purpose to consider every passage where they occur, with a view of showing what the Scriptures say on this subject; premising, at the outset, that *positive* and *absolute* statements of the *Divine* Word must of necessity be received before, and must therefore override, all *inferences* from other passages which seem to contradict them.

I. Parousia

Parousia is a word which is derived from *para*, near-by, and *ousa*, being; and invariably means the personal appearance or arrival of someone. It occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament².

1. It is applied to persons in the flesh: "I am glad of the *coming* of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus" (1 Cor. 16:17). "Nevertheless God...comforted us by the *coming* of Titus; and not by his *coming* only" (2 Cor. 7:6, 7). "That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my *coming* to you again" (Phil. 1:26). "His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak" (2 Cor. 10:10).

¹ "appearing" or "manifestation"

² It was often used for the state arrival of a king.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence" (Phil. 2:12).

2. It is applied to the personal presence of the Antichrist, when he shall be fully revealed. "And then shall that wicked", or lawless one (*ho anomos*), "be revealed...whose *coming* is after the working of Satan" (2 Thess. 2:8, 9).

3. It is applied to our Lord's own coming. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers...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). "Looking for and hasting unto the *coming* of the day of God" (2 Pet. 3:12). "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the *coming* of the Lord" (James 5:7). "Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts: for the *coming* of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8). "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 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). "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). "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him" (2 Thess. 2:1). Compare with this last text, Psalm 1:4, 5, "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me". "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order"—or, in his own proper band (*tagmati*)—"Christ the first fruits; afterward" (*epeita*, marking succession in time) "they that are Christ's at His *coming*" (1 Cor. 15:23). "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren. . .that we which are alive and remain unto the *coming* of the Lord...shall be caught up together with them" (i.e. "the dead in Christ") "in the clouds, to meet" (*eis apanteesin*, being the same phrase as is used in Matthew 15:1, 6, and in Acts 28:15, and nowhere else) "the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:13-17). "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed away from Him" (*ap' Autou*. See and compare Revelation 1:7, with 6:15-17; and note the contrast, 1 John 4:16, 17) "at His *coming*" (1 John 2:28). "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy *coming*?" (Matt. 14:3). "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 the *coming* of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:39). "Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness (*Epiphaneia*) of His *coming*" (2 Thess. 2:8). With this compare Antichrist's *coming*, verse 9. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ; but were eye witnesses of His majesty", i.e., on the holy mount (2 Pet. 1:16). (See and compare Matt. 17:1-8).

II. Epiphaneia

Epiphaneia is a word which is derived from *epi*, upon, and *phaino*, to make light, let shine, throw light upon; and it means appearance, manifestation, shining upon; and is used six times only in the New Testament.

1. It is applied to Christ at His first coming. "God...hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the *appearing* of our Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 1:8-10). Compare John 1:14, "And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace

and truth".

2. It is applied to Christ, at His second coming. "I give thee charge...that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the *appearing* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6:13, 14). "I testify, in the presence of God, and of Jesus Christ, who is to judge the living and the dead, both of His *appearing* and His kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1. That this is the true meaning of this passage, see Tregelles). "And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the *brightness* of His coming" (*Parousia*). (2 Thess. 2 : 8). "Looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious *appearing* of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13, 14). "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).

III. Apokalupsis

Apokalupsis is a word which is derived from *apo*, away from, and *kalupto*, to hide—the exact opposite of hiding; and it means, uncovering, unveiling, manifestation; and when used of a person, it always denotes his actual appearance. It is used eighteen times in the New Testament.

1. It is applied to spiritual illumination of the mind and heart. "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the *revelation* of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16:25). "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the *revelation* of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12). "How that by *revelation* He made known unto me the mystery" (Eph. 3:3). "A light to *lighten* the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:32). "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and *revelation* of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5). "Making mention of you my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and *revelation* in the knowledge of Him" (Eph. 1:16, 17). "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, I shall not profit you, except I shall speak to you either by *revelation* or by knowledge" (1 Cor. 14:6). "Every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, bath a tongue, bath a *revelation*" (1 Cor. 14:26). "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and *revelations* of the Lord" (2 Cor. 12:1). "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the *revelations*, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7). "And I went up" (i.e. to Jerusalem. See Acts 15:12) "by *revelation*" (Gal. 2:2).

2. It is the title of the last book in the Bible. "The *Revelation* of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John" (Rev. 1:1).

3. It is applied to the second coming of the Lord. "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless" (rather, "uncharged", *anengkleetous*: for they were *not* blameless. See 1 Cor. 11:17) "in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:7, 8). "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the *appearing* of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:7). "Wherefore, gird up the loins of you 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). "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you...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). "Seeing it is a righteous thing

with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus *shall be revealed*"(literally, *at the apocalypse, en tee Apokalupsei*) "from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God" (2 Thess. 1:6-8).

4. It is applied to the resurrection of the saints themselves at the second coming of the Lord. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the *manifestation* of the sons of God". (See the whole passage, Rom. 8:18-23). Hence we are told that "when Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested", *phanerothee*, "then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4) for "we know that when He shall be manifested", *phanerothee*, "we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). Now, when Christ was "transfigured" on the holy mount, after the manner of His "power and *coming*" (*Parousia*),"His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:2). So likewise "shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43)—"as the sun when he goeth forth in his might" (Judges 5:31). "And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith Jehovah of hosts" (Mal. 4:3). While of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself at this period, it is said, that "a fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth". (See also in confirmation, Zech. 14:4, 5; Micah 1:3-5).

IV. Not Distinct as to Time

Now these Scriptures prove to a demonstration that the *Parousia*, *Epiphaneia*, and *Apokalupsis* of our Lord Jesus Christ, at His second coming, are *not* distinct as to time; but that His *Parousia*, or personal advent, necessarily produces His *Epiphaneia*; and it is this which constitutes His *Apokalupsis*.

This is moreover shown from the statements that while the saints are said to be "gathered", (2 Thess. 2:1) "raised" from the dead (1 Cor. 15:23) and "presented blameless" (1 Thess. 5:23) at the *Parousia*; they are urged, nevertheless, to "keep the commandment unrebukeable" until the *Epiphaneia* (1 Tim 6:13, 14) and to "look out" for *that* as their "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13, 14); while they are also told to "wait" for the *Apokalupsis*, when they are to be pronounced "uncharged", (1 Cor. 1:7-9) when "the trial of their faith" should be "found unto praise and honour and glory" (1 Pet. 1:7) when "grace is to be brought unto them" (1 Pet. 1:13) when they would "be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pet. 4:13); and *when only* they would fully "rest" (2 Thess. 1:7).

This is further confirmed by the statement, that "the man of sin" is to be destroyed "with the *Epiphaneia* of" Christ's "*Parousia*"(2 Thess. 2:8); and that this will not take place until His *Apokalupsis*. (2 Thess. 1:7).

V. They Dispose of the Secret Rapture

They completely dispose of the supposed secret rapture theory. For while we are told that the saints shall be raised at Christ's *Parousia* (1 Cor. 10:23); we are likewise told that "as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the *Parousia* of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:27).

Moreover, as we are informed that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven *with a shout*, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God", and that this will take place at His *Parousia* (1 Thess. 4:15-17); and that His voice shall then "shake not the earth only, but also heaven" (Heb. 12:26): for "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me", etc. (Ps. 1:4, 5); and that "Jehovah shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habita-

tion; He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against *all* the inhabitants of the earth" (Jer. 25:30); and "when He shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west" (Hos. 11:10); "and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all the tribes of the land" (*i.e.*, of Israel, *pasai ai phulai tees gees*) "shall wail at Him," *ep' Autou*, "Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1: 7) how is it possible that there could be any such thing as a secret rapture of the saints from the earth?

VI. They Disprove Pre-Tribulation Teaching

They prove likewise that the saints are not to be raised before "the great tribulation".

For they show that the saints are to be raised at Christ's *Parousia*; and that this *Parousia* will not take place until Antichrist has come to the end of his career; for they tell us that he is to be destroyed "with the *Epiphaneia*" of this. "*Parousia*" (2 Thess. 2:8), and that the saints only then "rest", when Christ Himself is thus revealed, *i.e.* at His *Apokalupsis* (2 Thess. 1:7); when only they assume His likeness, and are "manifested" with Him in glory (Col. 3:4; John 3:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:17).

Moreover, it is expressly stated elsewhere (Matt. 24:29-31). that the *Parousia* is not to take place until *after*, although it be "*immediately after*", that "tribulation"; while it is likewise stated that the martyrs under Antichrist (*i.e.* in the great "tribulation") are to be partakers of . "the *first* resurrection" (Rev. 7:13-17; 20:4-6); and that this resurrection is to take place at Christ's *Parousia*! (1 Cor. 15:23). Now, as there are only *two* *resurrections* (1 Cor. 15:23, 24; John 5:25-29; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:4, 5), it is manifest that the saints are *not* to be raised before "the great tribulation"—a truth which is further confirmed by Daniel 7:21, 22, and 25, which tells us that Antichrist "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; *until the Ancient of days came*, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom"; and by Matthew 13:30, 39-41, where our Lord tells us that the tares and the wheat are "both" to "grow together until the harvest": and that "in the time of harvest" He "will say to the reapers, Gather ye together *first* the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into My barn"—a statement which is afterwards explained by "the harvest" being described as "*the end of the age*", when "the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather *out of His kingdom* all things that offend", or, all the stumbling blocks, "and them which do", or work, "iniquity". Moreover the Lord promises His disciples that He will be with them "*unto the end of the age*" (Matt. 28:20), clearly showing that His disciples will not be raised up until then. What "the harvest" itself will be we learn from such passages as Revelation 24:14-16, and Joel 3, which really describe the destruction of the Antichristian hosts at the second coming of the Lord.

VII. Some Practical Conclusions

What then are the practical conclusions that we should draw from these things? Those which our blessed Lord Himself sets before us, when He foretells us of them. "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. . . . Therefore be ye ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh" (Mat. 24:42, 44). "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"; "...and then shall they *see* the Son of Man *coming* in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption" (*i.e.* "the redemption of appropriation", "the redemption of the body", the resurrection, Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; 4:30); "draweth nigh" And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and see that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell", literally, "are seated", *katheemenous*, *i.e.* settled down, "on the face of the whole earth. 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" (Luke 21:25-36). "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58): "Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and *then* shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5), "to Whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen" (Heb. 13:21).