
Behold I Show You a Mystery

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Much of what we believe and teach about the coming of the Lord comes from the short teaching that Paul gave to the believers in Corinth and Thessalonica. To Paul it was a great mystery of the ages that he spent years in quiet study (as he told the Galatians) in Arabia after his dramatic conversion to unravel. Paul had the great advantages of never having met Jesus in the flesh, he had a deep scholarly background in the Torah trained by Gamaliel to be a Pharisee and of course had the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to lead him into all truth. So let's see if we can get better insight into his great revelation of the coming of the Lord, the Resurrection and the mysterious "changed in the twinkling of an eye" that is characterized as "The Rapture".

Have we solved the mystery of 1 Cor. 15:51 ***"Behold I show you a mystery we shall not all sleep (die) but we shall all be changed in the twinkling of an eye..."*** Is it God's plan to disappear, vanish a billion people in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye and leave the rest of humanity to Satan's control and universal judgment and destruction? Is there anything more to this mystery that we may have missed or misinterpreted?

Now confession time: I believed and taught this vision of the future for many years. I am an old line Pentecostal and proud of my heritage. But I come from an era when we were a small fringe sect and were only too glad to believe that we the small remnant will be raptured out of here without hardly a notice from the world at large. Frankly a world revival of this scale (A135 million Chinese Charismatics??!!) was never in our end time theology.

So many years ago I decided to re-examine this mystery of Paul under the assumption that I must be missing something here. Is it really God's plan to take us out of this world? Is it really God's plan that only a small remnant of people are to be saved and the rest of humanity condemned to hell? Is there not a possibility of even a greater anointing of power from God than what we Charismatics are now experiencing? Can we not believe for world revival and a fulfillment of the Great Commission to disciple the nations? Do we have everything that God intends to give and now we must just be patient until we are raptured out of the earth?

Small things niggled me. Jesus prayed ***"Father I do not pray that you take them out of the world..."*** (John 17:15) So why did Paul preach we are being literally taken out of the world?

In my personal research I really did not understand the end until I understood the beginning. You do not understand Revelations until you understand Genesis. You do not understand the first Adam until you understand the second Adam, Jesus Christ...which is why Paul prefaces his "mystery" in 1Cor. 15:51 with an elaborate talk about the first Adam and the second Adam. Paul went back to Eden and he went back to Sinai (literally) to make sense of what the plan of God for the ages was. And in doing so there are a number of mysteries there that need to be explored if we are to understand our work of the Kingdom. What was the fruit? What was the beguiling of the Serpent? What was on offer to Adam and Eve? And very importantly why place Cherubim there to guard the place "lest anyone eat of the fruit and live forever" What in the world does that mean? Does that have anything to do with people living close by Eden living for hundreds of years? What did Paul make of all this? How did His idea of Christ as the second Adam affect his understanding of "changed in the twinkling of an eye"?

This is what we know about Paul. He trained under the great teacher Gamaliel as a rabbi of the Pharisee sect. That means years of intense study of the scriptures. So Paul was educated and knew the scriptures thoroughly. He was also a zealot. He hated this new sect of Messianic Jews and was

part of a hit squad sent by the Sanhedrin to squash this Messianic foolishness. They killed and locked up these Messianic Jews. On the road to Damascus he has his famous encounter with the risen Christ.

But it is important to understand what happened to him next. In his words in chapter 1 of Galatians he explains:

"...the gospel I preached by me is not after man for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by revelation of Jesus Christ...Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me but I went to Arabia...then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and abode with him 15 days..." (Gal. 1:11-18)

What was Paul doing in Arabia? I believe he went to Mount Sinai where God revealed himself to Moses. He went to get a fresh revelation from the God of Mount Sinai, Jesus Christ. But you thought that Mount Sinai was in the Sinai peninsula? Actually no, that is not what Paul says later in this same letter to the Galatians 4:25 ("***Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia...***").

So here is Paul's first great revelation after salvation:

I don't know how long he was there, but it took him three years of meditation before going to Jerusalem to the apostles to share with them his understanding of the gospel of Christ. Now let me show you how this time of meditation of his at Sinai affected his understanding of the "coming of the Lord".

Exodus 19:18 says:

"Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace and the whole mountain quaked violently. When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder. And the Lord came down on Mount Sinai to the top of the mountain and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain and Moses went up."

Now see how this affected Paul's teaching of the coming of the Lord

Who are you Lord asks Paul? It is Jesus whose followers Paul is persecuting.

The great God YHWH that revealed himself to our fathers....is actually Jesus the Christ! Wow! I'm on the wrong side .realizes Paul.

Second great revelation comes to Paul:

The great God YHWH came in fire, cloud and thunder and trumpets on the mount to meet with Moses. Then the great God transferred His presence to the tabernacle that He instructed Moses to build and took up residence in the Holy of Holies over the ark of the covenant and between the two great Cherubim. And above the Tabernacle there was a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. Again fire and cloud and the presence of God made manifest.

But then something happened.

The presence of God at some point departed from the Tabernacle/Temple. No glory cloud, no voice of God, no presence of God. By the time Paul was born the presence of God had not been evident for literally hundreds of years among the Jews.

Now came revelation number three:

But then Jesus came...and God poured himself into human form. The divine presence of God took on human form...***"the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory..."*** After three years in meditation in Arabia at Mount Horeb Paul goes to Jerusalem and spends 15 days with Peter. Peter tells him about their time with Jesus. The miracles. The incredible transformation on the mountain top that he experienced along with James and John. One moment Jesus the man is there with them and the next moment there is a cloud and the voice of God and Jesus is transformed before their eyes into a glorious heavenly being.

Paul now understands: God is not interested to be on the mountain top or in a tabernacle or in a temple made of hands...He is able to reside in a man! And that man Jesus can look so ordinary just like any other man but inside and behind that flesh resides the Spirit of God.

And in a twinkling of an eye that flesh temple can change into a glorious Spirit body and it can

change right back again to a very normal body. It happened on the Mount of Transfiguration (actually Mount Hermon) and it happened after His resurrection when He walked in a flesh and bones body among His disciples....and also walked through walls and appeared and disappeared where and when He wanted. Change from flesh body to Spirit body and Spirit body to flesh body happens instantaneously at will.

Now came revelation number four:

God dwelt and manifested His presence not only in Jesus Christ, but Jesus said His plan is for He and the Father to come and dwell in His disciples. That is truly awesome. But then Jesus asked Paul why are you persecuting me...meaning that Jesus must be living in His disciples that Paul was persecuting!

Somehow you can wrap your mind around the idea of the miraculous incarnation of Christ into the world born of the Holy Spirit and God can dwell in that holy flesh...but dwell and come and live in normal human beings? Now that takes faith to believe that possible.

And yet that is what happened on the day of Pentecost. The 120 gathered in the upper room and the sound once again of wind and noise and fire and God came and took residence inside His people. And that pillar of fire that was once over the Tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness is now hovering over the head of each of the 120...and they all spake with tongues and prophesied.

Now comes revelation five:

Paul knew from his study of scripture history and from his hearing about Jesus from Peter that something happens to human flesh when it gets exposed for any length of time to the glory of the presence of God. It gets changed.

Let me illustrate:

In Exodus 33:12-23 Moses asks the Lord if he can see His glory. God tells Moses you cannot see my face, you will die but stand here hidden in this rock and I will cover you with my hand and pass

you by and you can see my back. And so the great glory of God passed by Moses sheltered behind a protective hand of God. Now Moses comes down from the Mount and the bible says something had happened to his body after this exposure to the glory of God. His face glowed and shown with the power of God and this so frightened the people that he had to wear a vail.

But now move forward to the death of Moses at age 120. That something that happened to Moses body exposed to the glory of God affected his health and aging. This is what scripture says of his healthy body: ***"and Moses was 129 years old when he died; his eye was not dimmed nor his natural force abated"*** (Deut. 34;7) In other words he was in the peak of fitness.

And so God took Moses out of his body and God himself buried the body of Moses and scripture tells is that Satan contended for the body of Moses. Why? Because that body exposed as it was to the glory of God just would not fall apart and Satan wanted it as an idol to lead the Israelites into idolatry (like Lenin in stasis in Moscow!)

Which brings us to Eden. Ever wonder how those Edenites like Adam, Eve and their immediate descendants lived for hundreds of years? Could it be that they were exposed to the glory of God radiating out still from that sacred place even after they were expelled? Is that why God placed a Cherub there with a flaming sword to keep people out of that place "lest they live forever"! Is that why the ages of the patriarchs dropped from hundreds of years to about 120 years after the flood? The flood that destroyed the place where the presence of God was...nobody again lived for hundreds of years.

Now comes revelation six:

Now we come to the important revelation of the mystery. Paul sums it up in Col. 1:27 ***"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of his mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"***

Paul wants all the gentiles to know what was known to the Jews. That God has come in flesh.

Jesus Christ. God is not hidden away in heaven somewhere. He is here present on earth not dwelling in temples made by men but He is in Christ and Christ is in us. We are able to be the habitation of God. That is our glorious destiny as children of God. Our heavenly Father wants to live not just with us, but in us!

But now we must come to the final important revelation. If God then does indeed live in us then this will have profound implications for our physical bodies. We can live with the "hope of glory". What is this "hope of glory?"

Revelation seven:

Christ had the fullness of the Godhead in Him. But we have only received as Paul said a portion so far. He says in Eph. 1:13-14 *"...you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession..."* The word "earnest" is an old English word meaning "down payment". The Baptism of the Holy Spirit which we have received is only the down payment on our coming inheritance. The Lord has more for us. What more?

Paul elaborates on this "more" still to come in Romans 8:10-11. This is what he says:

"And if Christ is in you the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised Christ from the dead dwell in you he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you"

Here is what Paul is saying. You have Christ living in you and so therefore your spirit that once was dead is now a new creature. But you also have that same Spirit living in you that raised Christ from the dead and even though your mortal bodies are now actually dead, there is a big change coming to those bodies. And it is this...

As the presence and glory of God increases in the earth, that glory can only be demonstrated through God's new Body...His church. That is why we have a hope of glory. Because the glory

of God is going to fill the earth. Not as some heavenly light in the heavens. Not God in a burning bush; not God on a mountain top; not God in a Temple made of human hands. That glory is going to be made manifested in the earth through human beings in which God now lives.

And as that glory increases so we will be changed. Our mortal bodies will change. Contact with the power and glory of God changed Adam, it changed Moses and it changed the second Adam. Jesus Christ.

But does this mean we are suddenly transported out of this earth into heaven?

Paul answers that question very clearly in the very same verses in Romans 8. This is what he says in Rom 8:19:

"For the earnest expectation of all creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God"

Please note: Paul did not say all of creation waits for the manifestation of the Son of God Jesus Christ. That is what we are preached with. We wait for the coming of the Lord to come and take us out of the world. But that is not the revelation that Paul received. That is not the mystery of the change in the twinkling of an eye that he saw.

Paul saw that the children of God will receive a blast of the glory of God, a new anointing of power from on high that will allow for the manifested presence of God on earth through His people so much that all the earth will be filled with the glory of God...and all of creation, the nations of the earth, the sick, the poor, the desperate, the demon possessed, the lost...they are all waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God...waiting for their deliverance, waiting for their salvation.

How then will they be saved or delivered if the result of that change of glory results in us being taken out of this world? That is not Paul's revelation and that is not what is going to happen!

This is what I believe is the great "mystery" that was not revealed before. But what was known and not a mystery was that the Lord would return and that there would be a resurrection and an end.

Paul's Explanation of the Coming of the Lord and the End of the Ages

Before His crucifixion Jesus told His disciples that He was going away but that He would return, "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am you may be also" (John 14:3). What an incredible statement, I am going to be killed but I am coming back! This has been the clarion call of the church through the ages, Jesus is coming back to take us with Him! Death is not the end, there is a resurrection, there is a place prepared for us in heaven. The death, the resurrection and the return of Jesus Christ is the bedrock of our faith as Christians. But how Christ returns and when Christ returns have caused much debate among us.

The long held view of the church since the time of the Reformation is that there is just one more return of Christ called the Second Advent or the Second Coming of Christ. This is the time that the dead will rise in the resurrection and this is the time that those who are still alive on the earth will be changed in the twinkling of an eye and be caught up into heaven to meet Christ in the air. The Kingdom of God started on earth with Christ's first coming and resurrection and it will finish with His Second Coming in triumph.

But over the last hundred years within the evangelical and charismatic movements there has prevailed another view first popularized by the Brethren movement in the 1800's and the Schofield Bible early in the 1900's. It said basically this: there is first a secret coming of Christ for His saints called the rapture which also includes a resurrection of the saints, then there is a 7 year tribulation period with the appearance of the Antichrist after which there is another coming of Christ which is followed by a thousand year reign of Christ on the earth and then after that there is another resurrection of the dead. So according to this view there are still two more comings of Christ and still two more resurrections and the Kingdom of God has not yet come and will only come some time in the future.

I used to hold the second view but after much

study of the Word came to the first view along with such men of God as Oswald J. Smith and Pat Robertson (CBN, The 700 Club) who had this to say:

"We might go through all the writers of the New Testament and we would fail to discover any indication of the so-called two stages of our Lord's coming...there is no verse in the Bible that even mentions it." (Oswald Smith, *Tribulation or Rapture-Which?* P.10.)

"I do not find in the Bible the teaching that Christians will be raptured prior to the tribulation...The Bible teaches two comings of Jesus-one His birth; the second, his coming again in triumph. There is no third coming for a secret rapture." (Pat Robertson, *Answers to 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions*. P.155.156)

Just a personal observation about my own researches into the coming of the Lord: In another article on my website you will find my article titled "The Seven Comings of the Lord". This is actually a fascinating look at the seven time that scripture describes the coming of Christ from heaven to earth starting with His coming as a babe in Bethlehem to His final coming as Paul describes as we will now see "and then comes the end when Christ will deliver up the Kingdom to the Father."

So I personally don't use the term "The Second Coming of Christ" but will use it here as we are dealing here with Paul's explanation to the Greek believers who had never heard of things like the resurrection of the dead or the idea that time and history has an end.

End Times Confusion

We have a lot of confusion today about the coming of the Lord and the End Times.

We have an elaborate systems of several comings of Christ and several resurrections, interspersed with a Rapture, a 7 year Great Tribulation and the Millennium reign of Christ. It might look pretty on elaborate charts to try to explain everything but in actual fact it only adds to the confusion of the believers.

The confusion us because preachers are not basing their teachings on the proper understanding of the Kingdom of God. To clear this up here is the foundation statement that is the bedrock you have to interpret prophecy on:

The Kingdom of God began on earth when Jesus rose from the dead and all power in heaven and earth was given unto Him. He is now Lord over all and He will continue to rule seated at the right of the Father until all His enemies are made His footstool. The last enemy to be conquered is death. He then returns at the last trumpet, with the shout of the Archangel and with all His holy angels to gather His saints who are alive on the earth (the Rapture) and raise from the dead those already passed on.

Simple enough? Now let's look at some scriptures to see how they flow with this simple explanation for the Kingdom and the Second Coming of Christ. There are two sections of scripture that are always quoted when presenting the idea of the Rapture. 1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thes.4. Let's have a closer look at them and see if we are saying correctly what Paul was trying to explain to his Greek Christian audience. For a moment now just put away all your prophecy books and let the Apostle Paul teach you the simple truth of when the Rapture and Second Coming of Christ take place.

Paul on the Rapture and Second Coming

Put yourself in Paul's place for a moment. His only scripture to refer to was what we call the Old Testament. So anything he is teaching must be grounded in the scriptures and prophecies of the Old Testament. And now he must also explain these scriptures to his Greek converts in Corinth and Thessalonica.

For Greeks of that day what Paul was presenting was totally new and unknown. They had no conception of history having an ending, or of history actually having a purpose or that there is such a thing as a resurrection from the dead with new spiritual bodies that were tangible.

The Greeks had an idea of life after death but it was a vague idea of ghostly wisps they called "shades" living in "Hades" the place of departed spirits. For them also daily life had not changed for hundreds of years. History just meandered in purposeless circles with nothing really changing. Now read 1 Cor. 15 and begin to see how Paul is teaching them.

For the first 22 verses he is defending the idea that there is such a thing as the resurrection of the dead. Because in verse 12 he says, "...how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead." Some of these Greek converts found this whole idea of a resurrection from the dead to be very alien to them. So for the first 22 verses he goes into an extensive explanation of why it is necessary to our faith that we believe Christ rose from the dead.

But then from verse 23 he starts to explain how this all fits into God's plan for the ages. Here we have Paul teaching eschatology to his disciples and it is important for us to see how simple he makes it. No two more comings of Christ, no two more resurrections, no 7 year Great Tribulation, no 1000 year Millennium.

From verse 23 he begins to explain the order of how and when the resurrection and the Second Coming takes place:

"But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Then comes the end when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. 15:23-26)

Now let's unpack these very important verses. Firstly you must understand that Paul is grounding his teaching in the scripture, this was not just his imagination. Psalm 110:1 says "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Paul is describing three separate events in logical

order which consist of (1) the first resurrection when Christ rose from the dead, (2) then He ascended into heaven and started His rule to put down all authorities and powers and then (3) when He is finished He returns and resurrects the dead.

The First...

“Christ the firstfruits”. This was the first resurrection when Jesus rose from the dead and He cleared out paradise and took the Old Testament saints into heaven. Math. 27:52-53 confirms this and says, *“and the graves were opened and many of the bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared unto many.”*

The Second...

The reign of Christ: which we are now in where Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father after His resurrection and conquering all His enemies through His mighty church to whom He has given power to tread on Satan and his demons and to destroy all the works of the enemy. Please note that He is not said to be ruling from an earthly Jerusalem for a thousand years one day in the future. His reign began with His first resurrection and He is now ruling from the throne of God!

The Third...

“Then comes the end”, when He has put all His enemies under His feet the end comes and He returns triumphant, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and He comes to fetch us and conquers the last enemy death by raising the dead from the grave at His Second Coming. He then presents the Kingdom to the Father.

Does this line up with our foundation truth I told you to build your eschatology on? Yes it does. But what about the Rapture? Paul explains it further in this same chapter how “we shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye”.

Paul’s Rapture Explanation

In verse 35 he notes a further question some of the Corinthians have, *“and some will say, how are the dead raised up and with what body do they come?”* Paul now goes into a lengthy explanation from verses 36-49 explaining that there are

earthly bodies and there are heavenly bodies and that the Lord will give us real glorious heavenly bodies in the resurrection. He concludes his arguments with this statement in verse 50, *“for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”*

But now comes an obvious objection, but before his Greek believers can make this objection Paul answers the objection from verse 51. The unstated objection is this: Ok Paul, I accept what you say that the dead will be raised at the Second Coming of Christ and that they will be given new glorious heavenly bodies to enter heaven but not everyone will be dead when Christ returns, there will still be many multitudes alive on earth when He returns, all living in earthly corrupt bodies; how are they to enter heaven with their mortal bodies without dying first?

And this is how Paul answers in verses 51-52, *“Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep (we are not all going to die), but we shall all be changed (we are all going to get heavenly bodies even if we have not died yet). In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed (those not dead will be changed into heavenly bodies).”*

Can you see that Paul is describing the Rapture here. Everyone actually agrees this is a description of the Rapture. So when does the Rapture take place according to Paul? It takes place at the Second Coming of Christ when Christ raises the dead and those alive on the earth are changed in the twinkling of an eye. And when does the Second Coming occur? Paul says after Christ has reigned and put down all powers and all authorities, then comes the end. So does the rapture come before Christ begins His reign? No, not according to Paul, it happens “at the end” when Christ has finished conquering all His enemies.

The Thessalonian Teaching

Now let’s look at that other famous rapture scripture of 1 Thes. 4:13-17 and see if it agrees with what we have discovered from Corinthians.

“For I would not have you to be ignorant breth-

ren concerning those who are asleep (dead) that you sorrow not, even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 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 precede (precede) them which are asleep. 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; 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."

Can you see that there is no difference here between what Paul says to the Thessalonians and what he said to the Corinthian believers. Christ returns, the dead are raised and those not yet dead but that are alive on the earth when He returns are also transformed with the dead into heavenly bodies and meet the Lord in the air.

The only difference between the two is that with the Corinthian explanation he described **WHEN** the Second Coming was to be. He did not do that with the Thessalonians. And when was Christ to come again? After He has reigned in heaven putting down all His enemies, the last enemy is death, then comes the end when He comes back to take His saints, raise the dead and He hands the Kingdom over to the Father. There is no resurrection, rapture or Second Coming before the "Millenium", it occurs after the reign of Christ when He is victorious over all His enemies.

But in 2 Thes. 2 Paul does give us another interesting clue as to when the coming of the Lord is going to happen. He says something very important must happen before the coming of the Lord. *"Now we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Second Coming) and our gathering together unto him (the rapture), that you be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled neither by spirit nor by word neither by letter as from us that the day of Christ is at hand"* (verses 1-2)...Here is what Paul is saying; don't think that the rapture and the Second Coming is at any moment. Why?

Someone had written to the Thessalonians claiming to be Paul and scaring them saying the end was at hand, Christ is coming soon. This of course is a common occurrence today when every pulpit and TV program and prophecy book coming out saying, "it's the end times Jesus is coming" because all the signs have been fulfilled. Paul had to calm them down by saying the following in verse 3:

"Let no man deceive you by any means (lots of deception still going on today with continuous false prophecies of the end times), for that day shall not come (the rapture and Second Coming of Christ) except there come a falling away first and that man of sin be revealed the son of perdition." (the Antichrist).

Paul says here, don't worry the Rapture and Second Coming of Christ does not take place until there is first coming a great falling away and "the Antichrist" or "man of sin" is revealed. But every popular prophecy book that you read on the Rapture and the end times will tell you the exact opposite of what Paul just said to the Thessalonians. They all teach, first the Rapture to take us out of here and then comes the Antichrist and the Great Tribulation. Why? So we can escape the suffering to come. People love this kind of deception because who wants to hear bad news? But Paul is upfront about the bad news, he says there is coming a great falling away of Christians because of the deceptions and the sufferings. He warned us that we are in a fight with Satan and his followers and that with Christ as our head, we the Church, will destroy all the works of the enemy and then comes the end when Jesus returns triumphant. But people don't want to hear about the battles ahead, they want to hear about an easy quick escape out of here and let the Jews tackle the Antichrist.

Let me make another interjection: The only mention in scripture of an "antichrist" is by John in his epistles and he says there are many and they all come from within the church. Paul agrees with this and describes him as a man of sin sitting in the temple of God. Please refer to my article on the Antichrist on my website where I agree with the Reformation teachers that this was the Papal system that infiltrated the church and persecuted the saints of God.

The Parousia of the Lord

There is another coming of the Lord which we must not forget in the midst of all our studies on prophecy and signs of the times. In the New Testament the Greek word “parousia” is also used for the “coming” of the Lord. This word in New Testament times was used to denote “presence” or “arrival” or “presence after absence”. The “parousia” of the Lord is His promise to every believer “I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.” (John 14:18). Jesus promised all of His disciples through all the ages, “behold I am with you even to the end of the world.” (Math. 28:20). The coming of the Lord for us therefore is not just an apocalyptic event at the end of time but a continuous present reality that the Lord has truly come to each of us. He is with us, we are not alone. This is the coming of the Lord in His saints and not just for his saints. For Paul says that the Lord is coming to be glorified in his saints. We are to walk daily in His presence, His “parousia”. When two or three of us gather together He is in our midst.

This concept of the coming of the Lord in His saints and His manifested presence now with us is crucially important for us in the battles ahead. Some would tell you that we are not able to defeat Satan in this world and that we must leave it till Jesus comes with His angels. But let me show you the power of this “parousia” in 2 Thes. 2:8: *“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.”*

I am going to give you the real Greek words for “brightness” and “coming” and then see how it reads. “Brightness” is translated from the Greek word “epiphania” which means “manifestation” and of course “coming” is translated from “parousia”. So here is a better translation: The Lord is going to destroy Satan through “the manifestation of His presence”. Where is He going to manifest His presence? In His people. Who is going to destroy Satan? The Church of Jesus Christ manifesting the presence of Christ in this world. This manifestation of God’s presence is only going to increase in His people and with that will

mean an increase in our ability to destroy the works of Satan. This is our calling, this is our task and when we have finished that task, then the end will come. All other signs of “the end times” are deception that Paul warned you against.

So...

If Jesus prayed in John 17:15, “I pray not that thou takest them out of the world...” do you really think we are going to get taken out of this world? If Jesus said, “In this world you shall have tribulation” (John 16:33) do you really think you are going to escape tribulation? Many evangelicals are like Thomas who would not believe Jesus rose from the dead until he could touch him; today they will not believe that Jesus is actually now ruling until they see Him physically on a throne in Jerusalem. This is unbelief.

Jesus is now Lord, His Kingdom has come, His Church is triumphant against Satan and all his demons and He will return to resurrect the dead and rapture the living saints when the job is done and not before. Until then we have a job to do...even so come Lord Jesus.

Jude 1:14 says the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, so surely He must come **for** His saints in the rapture before He can come **with** His saints at the Second Coming? Wrong. The “saints” referred to here mean “holy ones” which are the angels. See Deut. 33:2 “the Lord came from Sinai...with ten thousands of his saints (angels)”. Jesus comes with His angels to fetch His saints!

The next coming of the Lord?

You will find that in 2 Thes. 1:7,10...

And you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels...when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe...”

There is a coming of the Parousia, the Presence of the Lord in all the earth...that time is upon us!
