



# THE STAGES OF OUR LORD'S RETURN

NOT only the object and manner of our Lord's Return, (as described, e.g., in *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, pp. 89-116; Vol. 2, pp. 103-172), but also the stages through which His Second Advent progresses, are of deep interest to all "that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

We must not expect that at the Second Advent, any more than at the First Advent, all the pertinent prophecies mark one particularly eventful moment, namely, the moment of our Lord's arrival. His First Advent was not marked by any sudden or surprising demonstration, out of the usual order of things, but it was manifested and proven by the gradual fulfilment of prophecy, which showed to thoughtful observers that the events then to be expected were being accomplished on time.

And thus it is in connection with the Second Advent: it is of less importance that we discover the exact moment of His arrival than that we discern the fact of His *presence* after He has arrived, even as at the First Advent it was less important to know the exact date of His birth than it was to recognize His *presence* after He was already present (John 1:26). In considering the Second Advent, the act of coming and the moment of arrival are too frequently emphasized, whereas it should be thought of as *a period of His presence*, as was the First Advent. The precise moment at which that presence begins would then seem less important, and His object and work during *the period of His presence* would receive the greater consideration.

Because those who are "watchers" (Matt. 24:42; Mark 13:37) are not heedless, careless, indifferent servants of the King, they have on this, as on other subjects, scrutinized the Scriptures, and, as a result, they discern that four different Greek words, namely, *parousia*, *epiphaneia*, *apokalupsis* and *basileia*, are used to indicate the three different stages of our Lord's Second Advent.

Let us now examine these Greek words and their use in the Scriptures in relation to the Second Advent.

## CHRIST'S PAROUSIA, OR PRESENCE

Nearly all Greek dictionaries and Greek scholars are a unit in the thought that the word *parousia* means *presence*, as can be seen, e.g., from the marginal note, "Greek, *presence*," in both American Standard Versions and the English Revised Version, wherever the word *parousia* occurs and is not rendered "presence" in the text (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:23; Matt. 24:3, 27, 37); from Rotherham's translation (see also Appendix note on p. 271, third edition), Panin's Numeric New Testament and Young's Literal Translation, all of which uniformly render the word *parousia* by "presence" in every one of its 24 occurrences, the word "coming" as a proper translation of *parousia* being set aside; and from *The Emphatic Diaglott* and Fenton's translation, which also

render the word *parousia* by "presence" (e.g., in Matt. 24:3, 27), etc. Even the King James Version sometimes properly renders the word *parousia* by "presence," as can be seen from 2 Cor. 10:10 and Phil. 2:12.

The word *parousia* is derived from the feminine participle (*parousa, being present*) of the Greek verb *pareimi, i.e., I am present*. Therefore the noun *parousia* means *presence*, and it does so in every place where it occurs in the New Testament. The word *parousia* does not mean *coming, approaching or drawing nigh*, as of one's being on the way, but rather a stay at a place after one's arrival there—a *being near or alongside* in the sense of *presence* as distinct from *absence* (see, e.g., Phil. 2:12, where the Apostle Paul contrasts his *parousia*, his *presence*, with his *apousia*, his *absence*).

Nor does *parousia* mean *arrival*, for it presupposes an arrival. To mean *coming* in the sense of *approaching or drawing nigh*, it would have to be derived from another verb than *pareimi (I am present)*, e.g., from *eggizo (come near, approach, as used in Luke 21:8—"the time draweth near,"* and in v. 20—"the desolation thereof is *nigh*"—"has approached"). And to mean *arrival*, it would have to be derived from some such verb as *heko (arrive, as used, e.g., in Matt. 24:14—"then shall the end come,"* and in v. 50—"the lord of that servant shall *come*"). Thus the etymology proves that the word *parousia* means *presence*. Those Greek scholars and dictionary-makers who hold that *parousia* means *coming or arrival* do so in almost every case because of the creedal teaching that Jesus' Second Presence lasts only a part of a 24-hour day.

It is quite generally accepted by the ripest Biblical scholarship of our day that the first as distinct from the later part of our Lord's stay on earth after His return from heaven would be a secret one, the world at first not being at all aware of it, only the "watchers" knowing of it through the light of the Bible and the signs of the times (1 Thes. 5:1-5). Note carefully how in these verses we are shown that the period of Jesus' Second Advent will have come stealthily upon the unsuspecting world, while God's faithful people will not be in ignorance of His *presence*.

Because Jesus since His resurrection is a spirit being (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17; 5:16; 1 Pet. 3:18), and not a fleshly being (1 Cor. 15:50), He is of course invisible to mankind, except as He chooses to reveal Himself, as we have shown in detail in BS 554, 555.

From the descriptions given in Matt. 24:23-41 and Luke 17:20-37 we conclude that in the first, or secret stage of our Lord's Second Advent His special activities would be (a) gathering His Elect Bride to Himself through His Spirit and Word (Psa. 50:5; Mal. 3:17; this is described as Gospel-Age Harvest reaping in Matt. 13:30, 39; Rev. 14:14-16), preparatory to her deliverance from the earth, and her glorification with Him (Col. 3:4); and (b) preparing for the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21, 22; Dan. 12:1; Luke 17:26-30; 21:25, 26; Rev. 19:11-21), during which the *epiphaneia*, or *apokalupsis*, the manifestation or *revelation* of our Lord as present in His Second Advent takes place—He *reveals* Himself to the world as the Overthrower of Satan's empire and the Establisher of God's Kingdom and to the Great Company as their Cleanser and Deliverer (Mal. 3:2, 3; Matt. 7:26, 27; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; Rev. 7:14); also, He develops Those Consecrating Between the Ages for their places in the Kingdom.

We use the anglicized form, Parousia, to designate the secret first stage of our Lord's Second Advent (in which the Gospel-Age Harvest reaping takes place), especially in contrast with the Epiphany (*epiphaneia*), or Apocalypse (*apokalupsis*), the trouble time, and the Kingdom (*basileia*) period, which follow it, even though, as we shall see, the Scriptures sometimes use the Greek word *parousia* in a second or wider sense, to include not only the reaping time, but also the trouble time (the *epiphaneia*, or *apokalupsis*), and also in a third and still wider sense, to include not only the reaping and trouble times, but also the Kingdom period (the *basileia*).

A study of all the passages which use the Greek word *parousia* in reference to our Lord's Second Advent will show that this word is used in these three senses. We will now examine these passages, quoting them from the ASV and substituting for "coming" the proper translation "presence," as given in the margin, using SMALL CAPITALS to indicate it.

### PAROUSIA AS THE REAPING PERIOD

First we will prove that *the word PAROUSIA is used in certain passages with specific reference to the period during which the Gospel-Age Harvest reaping takes place, and during which the world as such is ignorant of Jesus' Second Presence.*

(1) Matt. 24:3: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy PRESENCE, and of [margin] *the consummation of the age?*" It is because of the secret character of this first phase of our Lord's Second Presence that the disciples asked for *the sign* of His *parousia*—the reaping time (Matt. 24:39)—and of the end (consummation) of the Age (Matt. 13:39); for if this phase of it were visible and publicly manifest, it would have required no sign to prove its having set in; the visibility of it would be proof positive that it had set in. The sign that Jesus gave that would prove, not to mankind's natural eyes, but to His faithful watchers' eyes of understanding, that His presence had set in, is the symbolic sunlight—the Truth on religious and secular matters, which in the harvest picture is the reaper's sickle (Matt. 24:27, 28, 30, 31; Luke 17:34-37).

(2) Matt. 24:27: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and is seen [shineth] even unto the west; so shall be THE PRESENCE of the Son of man." Here the Greek word *astrape* is translated *lightning*, one of its meanings; the other is *light*. Both of these meanings occur in the Bible and in classic Greek, as Thayer and Liddell & Scott show. The thought of *lightning* certainly does not fit here, for *it is not a peculiarity of lightning to shoot across the whole heaven, nor to start from the east and go even to the west.* It is as liable to start from the north or south or west or any point between these as it is to start from the east, and also as liable to go in other directions than the west; and usually it shoots over only a fractional part of the sky, not over the whole sky, as would be implied, if lightning were here meant.

Certainly the word *astrape* in Luke 11:36 does not mean *lightning*; for that does not come from either a literal lamp (ASV, NASB) or a figurative lamp (which the Bible is to us—Psa. 119:105). Here *astrape* evidently means *light*. The word *astrape*, when used of the angel's appearance in Matt. 28:3, evidently means *light*, and not *lightning*; for rapid electrical motion, and that away from the starting point, is always associated with lightning, and this cannot be identified with the

appearance of a sitting angel, which in this case was a very bright light. These three passages show that *astrape* also means *light* in the New Testament, as it often does in classic Greek.

On the other hand, *it is a peculiarity of the sunlight to shine out of the east even unto the west*. Therefore in Matt. 24:27 *the light of the sun* as an evidence of the sun's presence is used in a simile, illustrating that *the Truth*—figurative light—including the fulfilment of prophecy, is the sign—proof—of the initial stage—the reaping period—of the Second Presence of the symbolic sun, our Lord Jesus. It is because this initial stage of Jesus' Second Presence will thus be recognized only by the eyes of understanding, not by those of the natural body, that Jesus warned His faithful against being deceived by those who would, as certain fanatical believers have for years been doing, ask them to go to certain mountains or deserts to see the Lord, and would, as others, Spiritists, have been doing, ask them to enter seances ("secret chambers") to see Him in His Second Advent (Matt. 24:24-26).

(3) Matt. 24:37-39: "*And as were the days of Noah, so shall be THE PRESENCE of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be THE PRESENCE of the Son of man.*"

The *unbelief* as to, and consequent *ignorance* of, the coming flood, on the part of the world during the days of Noah's presence *before the flood*, while the world was going about the ordinary affairs of life, are here paralleled with a similar *unbelief* and *ignorance* on the world's part while it would be going about the ordinary affairs of life during the Parousia of our Lord, the first day, the "one of the days of the Son of man" *before the trouble* (Luke 17:22). This stage is the first one of His Second Advent; for it is through the trouble of the second stage (in part included in Luke 17:26, 27) that the world toward its end learns of His presence.

While the comparisons in Matt. 24:37-39 are those brought out above, those in Luke 17:26-30 differ somewhat from them. There is in this passage, unlike in Matt. 24:37-39, no comparison between the unbelief and ignorance during the days of Noah before the flood and during the Parousia, before the trouble. Nor is any more than one of the days of Luke 17:26-30 directly implied in Matt. 24:37-39 and directly mentioned in Luke 17:22, that one being the Parousia day, desired to be seen by the disciples during their lives and not seen by them (Luke 17:22); for it was not the trouble day—the *epiphaneia*, or *apokalupsis*—of the two days of the Son of Man, but the arrival day, the Harvest reaping day—the Parousia—of the Son of Man that the disciples desired to see and did not see in their lifetime.

The comparison of Luke 17:26, 27 with the above-noted differences as between them and the one day—the Parousia day—of Matt. 24:37-39 are as follows: (a) The people going about the ordinary affairs of life in the type until the day Noah entered the ark *before the flood*, and in the antitype the world going about the ordinary affairs of life, until the entire Christ class would enter the antitypical Ark *before the Time of Trouble*; (b) the coming of the flood and the coming of the great tribulation; (c) the destructions of the flood and the destructions of the great tribulation. Point (a) in the antitype is fulfilled during the *parousia* of Matt. 24:37-39, the first day of Luke

17:22, 26 and the one day of Luke 17:22; and points (b) and (c) occur during the *epiphaneia*, or *apokalupsis*, the second day of the two, that of Luke 17:30.

The second type, that of Lot, *etc.* (Luke 17:28-30), has the following comparisons: (a) In the type up to very shortly after Lot left Sodom the people going about the ordinary affairs of life, and in the antitype up to shortly after the Lot section of the Great Company would leave symbolic Babylon (Rev. 11:8; comp. 17:1-6, 18), just before the trouble would break out, the people of antitypical Sodom going about the ordinary affairs of life; (b) Lot leaving Sodom in the type, and in the antitype the Lot section of the Great Company leaving Babylon; (c) the rain of fire and brimstone in the type, and the activity of the destroying agencies of the Time of Trouble in the antitype; (d) the destruction of Sodom and its people in the type, and the destruction of symbolic Babylon and its partisan adherents as such in the antitype. We note that v. 30 proves also that as on the pertinent day the Sodomites continued in their ordinary affairs until the destruction overtook them, so would the Babylonians continue in the day of the *epiphaneia*, or *apokalupsis* ("in the day when the Son of Man is revealed"), the ordinary affairs of life until the destruction reaches them.

We trust that, in the last three paragraphs, the comparisons of each of these two passages in itself, and also the comparisons and contrasts between them, now stand out clearly.

(4) 2 Thes. 2:1: "*We beseech you, brethren, touching THE PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him.*" Here the initial stage of our Lord's Second Presence is evidently referred to: (a) because the Thessalonians had been deceived into believing that the Lord had returned, and (b) because the Apostle Paul then proceeds to prove that the Second Advent had not yet set in, by showing that a preceding sign, not yet fulfilled, must first set in—Antichrist's rise, reign, revelation and consuming. If Paul and the Thessalonians had believed that Jesus Second Advent was to be visible to mankind's physical eyes, and not having seen Him, the Thessalonians would not have believed the error that it had already set in, and Paul would have appealed to their sense of sight in disproof of their error; for Paul's method of disproving their view would have been very clumsy, if the proof from sight had been applicable; for his quick and logical mind would have seized upon so pertinent an argument if it had been available. His not using so evident an argument, and his resorting to a far less patent one to disprove the error, are proofs that it was not available.

Thus we have proved that in Matt. 24:3, 27, 37-39 and in 2 Thes. 2:1 *the parousia* is the secret first stage of Jesus' Second Advent, the reaping period, during which He reaps the wheat and the tares, while the world as such is ignorant of His Second Presence.

Using other figures—eagles and a carcass—than that of the harvest, whose sickle is the Truth, the connection between Matt. 24:27 and 28 proves the same thing, as also Luke 17:34-37 under those figures and still others proves the same thing. The figurative light of v. 27 is the same as the figurative carcass of v. 28, and both are the Truth (Matt. 24:27, 28); and Jesus shows that the gathering (harvesting) of the Lord's people, the taking from one bed, from one field, and from co-grinding at one mill, would be to the symbolic carcass, the Truth, even as Palestinians eagles

gather to a carcass, a body, for food. Thus the Truth as the light attracting their attention to His Second Presence, and the Truth as the food gathering them together, and the Truth as the sickle reaping them, is the first means that our Lord in the first stage of His Second Advent uses to manifest His Parousia and to do the Harvest reaping work. Therefore the Truth is emphatically the sign of His Parousia, the reaping time.

### PAROUSIA AS THE ENTIRE HARVEST

We now proceed to the proof that *both the first and second stages of our Lord's Second Advent are covered by the term PAROUSIA*. The second stage of His Second Advent is the trouble time, the Day of Wrath (which is the Epiphany, or Apocalypse, as a period); and this Time of Trouble precedes the third stage, *the basileia*, of our Lord's Second Presence. That the trouble—wrath—time laps slightly into the reaping time and then succeeds it for a period, is evident from many Scriptures (Amos 9:13; Matt. 13:42; Rev. 6:9-11 [await the last member's consecration]; Rev. 7:1-3; 14:19, 20). Briefly would we now explain those passages in which the word *parousia* includes, with the first, the second stage of our Lord's Second Advent. It is a peculiarity of these particular passages that they include both the reaping and the wrath periods, *i.e.*, they apply to the Harvest in the wider sense of the word.

(1) 1 Thes. 2:19 "*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at his PRESENCE?*" The Apostle Paul, acting as the mouthpiece of all the faithful teachers of the Body of Christ during the Gospel Age, here says that those whom they win for our Lord's own, will be their hope, joy and crown of glorying during our Lord's *parousia*. Since the sleeping saints were to be raised from the dead first (1 Thes. 4:13-17) and the last ones of the remaining saints were not to get their deliverance until "caught up together with them in the clouds" of trouble in the great Time of Trouble, and since all of such faithful teachers, to have the abovementioned privilege with all those whom they won, must be with the Lord, it follows that the word *parousia* in this verse covers, not only the first, but also the second stage of our Lord's Second Advent, His *epiphaneia*, or *apokalupsis*.

(2) 1 Thes. 3:13: "*To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at THE PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.*" In order for all the saints to be present with God and Jesus during the *parousia* mentioned here, it must cover also the time of His *epiphaneia*, the time of His appearing, when all the saints appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4).

(3) 1 Thes. 4:15: "*We that are alive and that are left unto THE PRESENCE of the Lord shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep.*" As already shown, the connection proves that all the saints are included in this description. Therefore in this text, as in 1 Thes. 2:19; 3:13, the word *parousia* covers not only the first, but also the second stage of His presence, *the epiphaneia*, or *apokalupsis*.

(4) 1 Thes. 5:23: "*May your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at THE PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" This passage also refers to the first and second stages.



(5) 2 Thes. 2:8, 9: *"Then shall be revealed the lawless one [the Antichrist], whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation [bright shining, epiphaneia] of his PRESENCE, even he, whose PRESENCE is according to [accompanied by] the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."* Here the first and second stages of our Lord's Second Advent are meant, because Antichrist is to be destroyed in the time of wrath (Dan. 7:8-11, 26; 12:1; Matt. 24:21, 22; Rev. 18 and 19), which is the second stage of our Lord's Second Advent, as an effect of the Truth shining brightly during both of these stages. In v. 9 the word *presence* does not refer to Antichrist's presence but (as indicated by the relative pronoun *whose*, having as its antecedent the pronoun *His*) to Jesus' Second Presence; this is here shown by facts to be in its first and second stages, during the working of every kind of Satanic delusion.

This frenzy of delusion is an allusion to the deluge of error in the world since about 1830, when through infidelity the darkening of the symbolic sun (the New Testament) and moon (the Old Testament) began, and especially since 1878, when the first of the six great siftings (No-Ransomism) began. We are now in the sixth of these, in which there is an abundance of delusions on all hands (vs. 9-12). Therefore the word *parousia* in 2 Thes. 2:8, 9 refers to the first and second stages of our Lord's Second Advent.

(6) James 5:7, 8: *"Be patient therefore, brethren, until THE PRESENCE of the Lord. ... Establish your hearts: for THE PRESENCE of the Lord is at hand."* Here we have two other occurrences of the word *parousia* used with reference to the first and second stages of our Lord's Second Advent, because before all the brethren would have exercised the longsuffering here inculcated, the second stage (*the epiphaneia, or apokalupsis*) would have set in; for not until then would all the saints receive their eternal reward (Col. 3:4; 1 Pet. 1:7, 13; 4:13).

(7) 2 Pet. 3:3, 4: *"In the last days mockers [scoffers] shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his PRESENCE for, from the day the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."* The use of the expression, "last days" (the first is the reaping day, or the Parousia, and the second is the wrath day, or the Epiphany, the Apocalypse day), proves that the scoffing at the Lord's Presence here is with reference to its first and second stages. These scoffers, generally speaking, having been mistaught to expect our Lord's Second Presence to be visible to mankind's natural eyes and to last only a part of a 24-hour day, scoff about such a presence, demanding where it has been promised, unbelievably claiming that matters are proceeding as formerly, and pointing to the absence of Christ's visibility to mankind's natural eyes as proofs that His Second Presence could not have begun.

(8) 2 Pet. 3:12: *"Looking for and earnestly desiring THE PRESENCE of the day of God."* The expression, "THE PRESENCE of the day of God," is synonymous with the first and second stages of our Lord's Second Presence; for its first stage prepared the symbolic heavens and earth—in bundling the symbolic tares—for the wrath of its second stage.

(9) 1 John 2:28: *"My little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his PRESENCE."* Here we have a reference to the

confidence that all the faithful "watchers" would have before the Lord during His *parousia*, at His shining forth. This doubtless limits the use of the word *parousia* in this passage to the first and second stages of our Lord's Second Advent; for then, first, the Body members all share with Him (Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2).

### PAROUSIA AS THE ENTIRE MILLENNIUM

We will now explain the passages in which *the Kingdom* (BASILEIA) *phase of our Lord's Second Advent is included under the word PAROUSIA.*

(1) In 1 Cor. 15:23 we meet the first example of this use of the word: "*Then they that are* [who will become] *Christ's at* [during] *his PRESENCE* [shall be made alive]." It will be noticed that in v. 22 the Apostle Paul explains that all in Christ shall be made alive, not simply be awakened, but experience resurrection, perfection; for he uses this part of v. 22 to prove that by a man (v. 21) shall come the resurrection. In v. 23 he specifies two companies that shall be made alive, perfect, calling the first "Christ, a firstfruit." Evidently Jesus is not here meant, for Paul is here explaining the order in which all in Christ will be made alive, and is referring to an event future to his time, while our Lord was resurrected over 20 years before Paul used this language. The connection shows that the future verb, *shall be made alive*, carried over from v. 22, is the predicate in v. 23; therefore, the expression, *Christ a firstfruit*, must refer to the Church, the other firstfruit than Jesus (v. 20). By the expression, *Christ a firstfruit shall be made alive*, the First Resurrection is, accordingly, referred to (Phil. 3:11; Rev. 20:4, 6).

Who else in Christ shall be made alive? The passage says: "They that are [who will become] Christ's at [during] his presence." When will it be that the obedient of mankind (consecration to Christ maintained in obedience is the sense in which in the Millennial Mediatorial Reign the obedient world will be in Christ) will be made alive? We answer that according to the Bible it will be during the Millennium (Psa. 22:28, 29; Isa. 45:22, 23; compare with Gen. 22:16-18 and Phil. 2:10, 11; Rom. 14:9-11; 2 Tim. 4:1). Accordingly, the word *parousia* in 1 Cor. 15:23 refers to the Kingdom stage of our Lord's Second Presence.

(2) 2 Pet. 1:16: "*For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and PRESENCE of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Here the word *presence* (*parousia*) is evidently used of all three phases, because the vision (Matt. 17:9) of the transfiguration on the mount was a tableau of the Kingdom in its widest sense, according to Jesus' statement forecasting its sight by some of His disciples before their death (Matt. 16:28) and according to the Apostle Peter's explanation given in 2 Pet. 1:16-18. In that part (Matt. 17:2) of the vision in which Christ alone is the first one seen in light, *the parousia* and *the epiphaneia*, or *apokalupsis*, phases are implied; and in that part (Matt. 17:3) of the vision in which Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke with Jesus, *the basileia* phase of *the parousia* (in the widest sense) is implied.

Above we have discussed every occurrence of the word *parousia* connected with our Lord's Second Advent and we find that it is used with reference to three time stages of His Second Presence. We use it like the Scriptures in these three senses; and frequently, by way of distinction, we use it with reference to the first of these three stages, thus calling the reaping stage the



Parousia, especially in contrast with the wrath stage, the Epiphany, or Apocalypse, which follows the Parousia, and the Kingdom (*basileia*), which follows the Epiphany, or Apocalypse.

### CHRIST'S EPIPHANEIA, OR MANIFESTATION

We come now to a consideration of *the epiphaneia* (Epiphany, or Apocalypse). As a period it is the second time stage of our Lord's Second Presence. As already stated, it is the Time of Trouble (Matt. 24:21, 22; Dan. 12:1; Luke 17:26-32; 21:25, 26; Rev. 19:11-21), during which a less faithful, overcharged Spirit-begotten class, the Great Company, is delivered (Mal. 3:2, 3; Matt. 7:26, 27; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; Rev. 7:14), and Those Consecrated Between the Ages are developed.

The ablest Bible students of our day, from their careful scrutiny of the Bible prophecies, and the signs of the times and the world-troubles since the outbreak of the World War (Phase I) in 1914 (with accompanying famines and pestilences), are more and more coming to a conclusion with which we heartily agree. They are concluding that in the clouds of trouble that darken the symbolic heavens (the false religious systems) and involve the symbolic earth (human society) *the presence of the Son of man will shortly be recognized by the world of mankind* (Matt: 24:30; Luke 21:25-28; 2 Thes. 1:7-9; Rev. 1:7). If we are among God's watching people, we will recognize this before others see it; and thus the Day will not overtake us unawares.

### THE BIBLICAL USE OF THE WORD EPIPHANEIA

We now desire to investigate the Biblical use of the word *epiphaneia* and some of its related thoughts.

While we note the fact that the word *Epiphany*, though frequently used in English, does not occur in the English Bible, we should recognize that the Greek word *epiphaneia*, from which it is derived, does occur in the original Greek of the New Testament. In all it is found in six passages, which we herewith cite: 2 Thes. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 1:10; 4:1, 8 and Titus 2:13. In arriving at an understanding of its meaning, the consideration of a few things will prove helpful: (a) the word *epiphaino*, from which *epiphaneia* is derived; (b) the meaning of its basic part, *phaino*, (c) the meaning of the preposition *epi* with which *phaino* is compounded; (d) the force added to the word *phaino* by the preposition; (e) all the occurrences of *epiphaneia* in the Bible; (f) its various uses in the Scriptures; and (g) the general trend of Scriptural thought connected with the word.

We remark that the word *epiphaneia* is derived, not from a simple, but from a compound word—*epiphaino*—which is formed by uniting the preposition *epi*, meaning *on, upon, over, at, etc.*, with the verb *phaino*, meaning *to shine, to manifest*. *Epiphaino* derives its basic meaning from the verb *phaino*, and the preposition *epi* intensifies the meaning of *phaino* in the compound word, so that *epiphaino* means *to shine brightly, to manifest clearly*. These remarks help us to understand that, in harmony with Greek dictionaries, the noun *epiphaneia* primarily means *bright-shining, clear manifestation*. As a rule it refers to making an obscure or unseen thing very apparent to the physical or to the mental eyes. As we study its occurrences in the New Testament, we will be able clearly to see this.

## OCCURRENCES OF THE VERB EPIPHAINO

We precede the study of the six passages in which the Greek word *epiphaneia* occurs by the quotation and a brief explanation of the four passages in which *epiphaino*, its root word, is found in the New Testament, using SMALL CAPITALS on the English words that translate it:

(1) "*The dayspring [margin, sunrising, i.e., Christ] from on high hath visited us, TO GIVE LIGHT [shine upon—ASV; to give the bright shining of the Sun of Truth] to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace*" (Luke 1:78, 79). Here manifestly Jesus (John 1:9; 8:12; 9:5) is referred to as the One who clearly manifests God's ways to sinners and to saints.

(2) "*And when neither sun nor stars in many days APPEARED, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away*" (Acts 27:20). Here the bright shining of the heavenly bodies is referred to as unseen.

(3) "*The grace [favor] of God that bringeth salvation for all men HATH APPEARED, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly*" (Titus 2:11, 12). Here the thought seems to be that the Gospel message, which is an expression of God's favor, has been clearly manifested as salutary for all mankind, and, as such bright light, teaches especially God's people to live holy lives.

(4) "*After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man APPEARED*" (Titus 3:4). Here the Gospel is referred to as causing the kindness and love of God toward man to shine brightly before us.

In all of the four above passages it is apparent that the definition of *epiphaino* given above is correct: it means *to shine brightly, to manifest clearly*.

## OCCURRENCES OF THE NOUN EPIPHANEIA

A careful and reverent study of the six passages in which the word *epiphaneia* is found will reveal the fact that the New Testament uses it in two different ways: (a) *as THE ACTIVITY of manifesting persons, principles and things, previously obscure or hidden, by the Truth shining with special brightness*; and (b) *as that PERIOD OF OUR LORD'S SECOND STAY ON EARTH to which the Truth shines in special brightness, manifesting persons, principles and things hitherto obscure or hidden* (1 Cor. 4:5). In the order of their clearness we present with brief comments first the four passages in which *epiphaneia*, whose English equivalents in the respective passages we put in SMALL CAPITALS, is used to mean *THE ACT of manifesting persons, principles and things, previously obscure or hidden, by the Truth shining with special brightness*.

### THE EPIPHANEIA AS AN ACTIVITY

(1) "*Who [God] hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling ... according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but [which] is now made manifest by THE APPEARING of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath ... brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*" (2 Tim. 1:9, 10). In this passage the Plan and favors that

God prepared for His people before the world began are spoken of as being clearly *revealed* by the *epiphaneia*, *the bright-shining*, the clear teaching, of Jesus respecting persons, principles and things. Among the things clearly manifested by Jesus through the Gospel, God's Truth, the Apostle Paul mentions life and immortality. This passage is very clear as proving our first definition of the New Testament use of the word *epiphaneia*. It will be noted that in this passage *the epiphaneia*, the clear manifestation, is not connected with our Lord's Second Presence, but with the Harvest of the Jewish Age.

(2) "*Looking for the blessed hope [of seeing, being with and like our Lord; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3; 2] and APPEARING of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2:13, ASV). By the expression, "the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ," we are not to understand that, as some think, a dazzling natural light is meant, but rather the brightness of Their perfect characters shining resplendent in supreme wisdom, power, justice and love (Isa. 6:3; Psa. 72:19; Num. 14:21; Rev. 4:8; 15:3, 4). This passage says that the saints would expect two things in connection with our Lord's second stay on earth: (a) the realization of their hopes of seeing and being with and like Him, and (b) a clear manifestation of the resplendent characters of God and of Christ Jesus throughout the earth, even as heaven is now full of Their glory. Thus a manifestation of the glorious character of God and of Jesus Christ by the Truth shining with special clearness is referred to in this passage. And this, according to the passage under consideration, is to accompany Jesus' second stay on earth. Accordingly, this passage refers to His entire Second Advent period.

(3) "*Then shall that Wicked [one, the Antichrist] be revealed [manifested], whom the Lord [Jesus] shall consume with the spirit [power] of his mouth [the Bible, the Truth (John 17:17), is the Lord's mouth, that through which He speaks], and [whom the Lord Jesus] shall destroy with THE BRIGHTNESS of his coming [His Second Presence on this earth]"* (2 Thes. 2:8). This passage shows us that the glorious and powerful Truth of God will shine so brightly that through its manifestation of the Antichrist in its teachings, character and effects, the Lord will accomplish at His Second Advent the annihilation of the Antichrist.

(4) "*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day [the Judgment Day]; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his APPEARING*" (2 Tim. 4:8). This passage undoubtedly refers to our Lord's second stay on this earth, on the Last Day, when He will reward all God's servants (Rev. 11:18), who with yearning, love and delight have looked forward to that Day, in which Jesus, when rewarding His faithful followers, will manifest Himself in His glory by the brightness of His Word and works.

Our brief examination of the above four passages shows that the word *epiphaneia* means THE ACTIVITY of manifesting persons, principles and things, by the Truth shining with special brightness.

### THE EPIPHANEIA AS A PERIOD OF TIME

The word *epiphaneia* is used in the other two passages in a slightly different sense, namely, as THE PERIOD OF TIME DURING OUR LORD'S SECOND PRESENCE in which He will manifest persons, principles and things by the Truth shining with special brightness, even as a consideration of them will show:

(1) "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until THE APPEARING of our Lord Jesus Christ: which [appearing] in his times [in its own seasons] he shall show, [He] who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:14, 15). The Apostle Paul here could not have meant to give this injunction to Timothy as an individual, because Timothy died at least 18 centuries before the Epiphany period was due to set in. As Jesus frequently addressed His followers throughout the Gospel Age in the Apostles, their representatives, so here Paul seems in Timothy to address the Lord's people generally, especially the Truth servants, encouraging them to be faithful until that period of our Lord's Return which he here calls Jesus' *appearing*, His Epiphany (Col 3:4; 1 John 3:2), which this passage shows He would manifest in its separate time periods, when, as King of kings and Lord of lords, He would take to Himself His great power and prepare to reign in Millennial glory over the earth (Rev. 11:15-18; 19:6-16; 20:4-6).

(2) "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at [during] his APPEARING and his kingdom [basileia]" (2 Tim. 4:1). The Scriptures assure us that Jesus with His Elect Bride will judge the dead during the Millennial Mediatorial Reign. By the dead of this verse we understand Adam's non-elect condemned children to be meant, regardless of whether they are in the dying process or in the death state (Matt. 8:22; 2 Cor. 5:14). These are to have their judgment—trial for life—during the Kingdom, the *basileia* period, as 2 Tim. 4:1 teaches (see also Psa. 72:1-19; 22:27-29; Rom. 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:23-26; 6:2; John 5:25-29; Isa. 29:18, 24; 45:22, 23; Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:4, 6; Matt. 19:28; 20:21; Luke 2:34; 22:29, 30; Obad. 17, 21; Rev. 14:1; a copy of our Hope booklet free).

The "quick" the living (the fallen angels and new creatures, none of whom, as such, have ever been under a death sentence), therefore, are judged, according to this passage, during His appearing, His Epiphany; accordingly, it is *a period of time* connected with our Lord's Second Advent, even as the *basileia* also is *a period of time* connected with our Lord's Second Advent.

The two foregoing passages, therefore, teach that the word *epiphaneia*, from which we derive our English word *Epiphany*, also means A PERIOD OF TIME *connected with our Lord's Return* that is accompanied by a flooding of the earth with His all-exposing Truth, to set in after His Return, and before He and His Bride begin their Millennial Mediatorial Reign.

Accordingly, we see that both of our definitions for the word *epiphaneia* are correct: (a) THE ACTIVITY of *manifesting persons, principles and things by the Truth shining with special brightness* and (b) THE PERIOD OF TIME *connected with our Lord's Return in which there will be a special manifestation of persons, principles and things by the Truth shining with special brightness*.

From the above study of the word *epiphaneia* we see that of its six occurrences in the New Testament, one is used in a connection showing that it refers to *activities* of Jesus during the Jewish-Age Harvest; and the other five to *activities* and *times* connected with His Second Advent. These thoughts on the meaning of the word *Epiphany* will prove helpful for our better understanding of the other phases of our Lord's Second Advent.

## CHRIST'S APOKALUPSIS, OR REVEALING

The Greek noun *apokalupsis* is derived from the compound verb *apokalupto*, which is made up of *apo* (*off, away from*) and *kalupto* (*to cover, hence to hide or conceal, as used, e.g., in Jas. 5:20 and 1 Pet. 4:8—"shall hide [cover] a multitude of sins"*). Therefore *apokalupto* means to *take off the cover, i.e., to disclose, or to reveal, as used, e.g., in Matt. 10:26; Luke 12:2—"there is nothing covered [the Greek root word here used being *kalupto*] that shall not be revealed [uncovered, the Greek word here used being a future form of *apokalupto*]*." The noun *apokalupsis*, therefore, signifies an *uncovering, disclosure, revealment or unveiling* (as of a thing previously present but hidden). The name of the last book of the Bible is "APOKALUPSIS"—we call it "The Apocalypse," or "Revelation."

Thus we see that the primary meaning of the word *apokalupsis* (*uncovering, revelation*) is very similar to that of the word *epiphaneia* (*bright shining, manifesting persons, principles and things*). Both words imply *a manifestation, a revealment*, of that which would otherwise be concealed or hidden. Thus our Lord *epiphanizes* or *apokalypsizes* Jehovah, Himself, the Church, the Great Company, the Truth, the hidden things of darkness, the counsels of hearts, *etc.*—in a few words, *brings all pertinent persons, principles and things to bright light and UNCOVERS or REVEALS them in their real character*, in so far as this is necessary at the present stage of God's Plan.

As showing why both *the epiphaneia* and *apokalupsis* are concurrent, and not consecutive (as some have supposed), we might take a covered object in the dark as an illustration. We might shine much bright light on it, but we still cannot see it until also the cover is removed. On the other hand, the *uncovering* of the object can be made in the dark, but it cannot be seen unless there is also sufficient light shining upon it. Thus both *bright shining (epiphanizing)* and *uncovering (apokalypsizing)* are concurrently necessary to a proper *revealment*.

So *the epiphaneia, the apokalupsis*, of Jesus means, not His making Himself visible to mankind's natural eyes, nor simply His making Himself known, but (a) *His making also every other person and every principle and every thing clearly known that is to be made clearly known, especially in the end of this Age. Apokalupsis* like *epiphaneia*, also refers to (b) *the second stage or period of our Lord's Second Advent, the Time of Trouble, the Epiphany, or Apocalypse, the special time of such epiphanizing or apokalypsizing.*

We now list, with some pertinent comments, the passages where the noun *apokalupsis* and its verb *apokalupto* are used with reference to our Lord's Second Advent, using SMALL CAPITALS on the English words that translate them.

## OCCURRENCES OF THE VERB APOKALUPTO

We list first those which use the verb *apokalupto*:

(1) Matt. 10:26: "*There is nothing covered, that shall not be REVEALED; and hid, that shall not be known*" (comp. Luke 12:2). The exposures of evil in all walks of life are *manifestations* of the judging work of Jesus' Second Advent (1 Cor. 4:5).

(2) Luke 17:29, 30: *"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."* Sodom represents symbolic Babylon and Lot a section of the Great Company (Rev. 11:8; 2 Pet. 2:6-8). The destruction of Sodom by fire and brimstone represents the complete destruction of Babylon (Jude 7), which takes place in the great tribulation (Rev. 16:18-20; 19:20). Jesus' remark in v. 30 that the antitype of the raining of fire and brimstone upon Sodom takes place *in the day* in which the Son of man is *revealed*, proves that He is *revealed, i.e., manifested*, in the Time of Trouble, the Epiphany or Apocalypse period.

(3) Rom. 8:18: *"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be REVEALED in us."*

(4) 1 Cor. 3:13: *"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be REVEALED by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."* This refers to the testing of God's people during His Second Advent. The *day* is the day of trouble, the Epiphany or Apocalypse period.

(5) 1 Pet. 1:4, 5: *"An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be REVEALED in the last time."*

(6) 1 Pet. 5:1: *"A partaker of the glory that shall be REVEALED."* This and (3) and (5) above are among the texts which show that when Jesus is revealed in His Second Advent in power and glory—as these shall be made known, *uncovered* or *revealed* to the world—His Church will be with Him and will be *revealed* or *manifested* at the same time and in the same manner.

## OCCURRENCES OF THE NOUN APOKALUPSIS

The following texts contain the noun *apokalupsis*:

(1) Rom. 2:5: *"The day of wrath and REVELATION of the righteous judgment of God."* This refers to the time of our Jesus' Second Advent, when, during the Time of Trouble (His Epiphany, or Apocalypse) He judges the "quick," and during His Kingdom (*the basileia*) He judges the "dead" (2 Tim. 4:1), for it is then that He "will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6; Matt. 16:27; Rev. 20:12; 22:12).

(2) Rom. 8:19: *"For the earnest expectation of the creature [the world of mankind] waiteth for the MANIFESTATION of the sons of God [the Church]."* The context shows that this refers to the *manifestation* of the Christ class in Kingdom glory. Therefore in this passage *apokalupsis* applies to the Basileia, or Kingdom phase, of our Lord's Second Advent.

(3) 1 Cor. 1:7: *"So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for THE COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ."* God's people are here exhorted to keep active, watching and waiting for the great blessing until Christ's *manifestation* or *revelment*, though if Watchers, they are made aware of His presence and the work of "harvest" beforehand and share in the *revelment*.



(4) 2 Thes. 1:7, 8: *"The Lord Jesus shall be REVEALED from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance."* Through the unparalleled tribulation of the great Time of Trouble, Jesus will be *manifested* to the world as present in His Second Advent, as the Destroyer of Satan's empire and the Establisher of God's Kingdom.

(5) 1 Pet. 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."* When the *apokalupsis*, or *epiphaneia*, the second stage of Jesus' Second Advent is over, all the Little Flock is beyond the veil with Jesus, even as St. Paul assures us in Col. 3:4. Then their purified and refined faith is found to be unto God's and Christ's praise and their own honor and glory.

(6) 1 Pet. 1:13: *"Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the REVELATION of Jesus Christ."* This has much the same significance as 1 Pet. 1:7.

(7) 1 Pet. 4:13: *"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."* At the time of Jesus' revealing, His Church is with Him and is *revealed* or *manifested* at the same time and in the same manner.

From these passages it becomes evident that in relation to Jesus' Second Advent, the word *apokalupsis*, like *epiphaneia*, has two meanings: (a) THE ACTIVITY OF REVEALING OR UNCOVERING, whereby persons, principles and things, previously hidden or obscure, are made manifest; in this sense *apokalupsis*, like *epiphaneia*, has a wide time application as respects Jesus' Second Advent, stretching from His arrival until the end of the Kingdom, even as we have seen that the word *parousia* in application to the Second Advent indicates His presence in any of its three phases and in all of them from His arrival until the Kingdom's end; (b) THE PERIOD OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION, in which emphatically there is a special REVEALING or UNCOVERING of persons, principles and things, previously hidden or obscure.

### CHRIST'S BASILEIA, OR KINGDOM

The Kingdom (Greek, *basileia*) in its initial, or primary sense has its beginning at the same time as the Parousia. But as a third and separate stage of our Lord's Second Advent it has its beginning after the Parousia and the Epiphany, or Apocalypse periods have begun and accomplished some of their purposes, including the glorification of all Christ's Body members, the beginning part of the destruction of the great Antichrist and the rest of Satan's empire and much of the preparation for the establishment of the Kingdom, the Basileia as the Millennial Mediatorial Reign of Christ.

This Reign of Messiah in true peace on earth (Isa. 9:6, 7), for the blessing of all mankind, comes after the completed overthrow of Satan's empire (Psa. 46:8-10; Dan. 2:35, 44; 7:13, 14, 18-27). The Ancient Worthies, as Millennial princes (Psa. 45:16; Isa. 32:1; Heb. 11), will then be the chief rulers in the Kingdom's earthly phase. Many other Scriptures refer to this Kingdom Reign: Matt. 6:10, 33; 8:11; 19:23, 24; Mark 14:25; Luke 1:33; 12:32; 13:28, 29; 17:20, 21; 19:11, 12, 15; 22:29, 30; John 18:36; Acts 14:22; 1 Cor. 15:24-26, 50; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 1:6; 5:10 (see ASV for

the last two citations); 11:15. For details, see *The Millennium* (p. 48) and our Kingdom booklet (a copy free).

The three stages of Jesus' Second Advent—(1) the Parousia, (2) the Epiphany, or Apocalypse, and (3) the Basileia—are very important for us to keep in mind if we would understand clearly the subject of His Second Advent. The Parousia (in its narrow sense) is preparatory for both the Epiphany, or Apocalypse, and the Basileia, the Kingdom; and the Epiphany, or Apocalypse, carries forward the results of the Parousia and introduces the Basileia, the Kingdom.