

# THE *PAROUSIA* OF CHRIST

*A word study by Lloyd Dale*

***PAROUSIA*** {par-oo-see'-ah} Strong's #3952 from the present participle of 3918; TDNT - 5:858,791; n f

As we will show in this study, *parousia* is translated improperly as “coming” in AV twenty two times (22 times). While it is only translated properly in AV as presence twice (2) for a total of [24] usages in the NT.

**Parousia** means:

- 1) **PRESENCE**
- 2) having arrived, advent; especially the 70 AD presence of Jesus Christ **ruling in heaven**: to raise the dead, hold judgment, produce the resurrection of the dead, and set up formally and gloriously His heavenly kingdom of God (2Tim 4:18] the new heaven and the new earth)
- 3) This word comes from the verb PAREIMI which means “at hand”, “to be present”. The noun, *parousia*, signifies “**PRESENCE**”. This verb emphasizes the actual personal presence of the one who has ARRIVED. *PAROUSIA* never indicates the ACT OF COMING of a person, but **denotes the presence** of one who has already come or arrived.

**pareimi** {par'-i-mee} Strong's #3918 from 3844 and 1510 (including its various forms); TDNT - 5:858,791; vb

AV -

- be present (9)
- come (improperly translated this way 7 times, Matt. 26:50; John 7:6, 11:28; Acts 10:21, 12:20, 17:6; & Col.1:6)
- present (3)
- be present here (1)
- be here (1)
  - 1a) to be by, be at hand, to have arrived, to be present
  - 1b) to be ready, in store, at command

First, we will examine the passages of Scripture that contain the word ***PAROUSIA*** as it is applied to someone other than Jesus Christ.

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

That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my presence (*parousia*) with you again. (Philippians 1:26)

Note that they were to rejoice when Paul was present with them again.

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

Note in this verse the word "*parousia*" is properly translated presence and is obviously contrasted with the word *absence*.

I am glad of the presence (*parousia*) of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. (1 Corinthians 16:17)

This is an excellent example to demonstrate that the AV translates Parousia improperly. The AV has coming here but it would be impossible to supply something while they were coming. The phrase "they have supplied" proves they were already present; which is the proper meaning of the word Parousia!

Nevertheless God, that comforts those that are cast down, comforted us by the presence (*parousia*) of Titus; 7 And not by his presence (*parousia*) only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. (2 Corinthians 7:6 & 7)

Notice that in this verse Paul clearly states that Titus, "told us"--Titus could not have told them anything while he was still "coming". He could only have "told them" while he was present with them!

*Even him* (the man of Sin, i.e. the abomination of desolation), whose presence (*parousia*) is after the working of the adversary with all false power and signs and wonders, (2 Thessalonians 2:9)

Note he could not do the works of the adversary while he was "coming," he could do these works only when he was present.

Now let us examine the passages which contain the word **PAROUSIA** in reference to our Lord Jesus Christ.

And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying; tell us, when shall these things be? And what *shall be* the sign of thy *parousia*=(presence), and of the end of the aion=(age, not "world" as incorrectly given in some translations)? (Matthew 24:3)

Sign of His presence, *where*? Present on the throne of His glory, ruling His kingdom. If this were a personal, physical, visible "coming" to earth, why would the disciples need a "*sign*" to know when it was supposed to take place? They would simply see Him. Most commentators want to translate the parousia in this verse as "coming" because they believe in a personal, visible, physical return of Jesus Christ and they know that if He was going to be personally, physically, visibly present there would be no need of a sign for all could see Him, therefore, they conclude that the writer was referring to His "coming".

However, the disciples did not ask about His “coming”, they asked about His “parousia” and the end of the Mosaic Marriage covenant age, thus, they asked for a “sign” of this otherwise invisible event.

The “sign” was the smoke of the temple and the city of Jerusalem as it burned [Matt.24:30; Rev.18:18, etc.]. When the first century Christians saw the smoke ascending into the heavens from the destruction of Jerusalem by stoning and by fire they would know that the whore (the Judaism of Jerusalem) had been judged according to the law and the age of the Mosaic marriage covenant had come to its prophesied end, the Parousia of Jesus Christ was very, very imminent.

For as the lightning (a better rendering, as in the brightening of a new day) comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also *be* the *parousia*=(presence) of the Son of man be. (Matthew 24:27)

But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the *parousia*=(presence) of the Son of man be. (Matthew 24:37)

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all (unrighteous sinners) away (but all the righteous were kept safe in the Ark); so shall also the *parousia*=(presence) of the Son of man be. (Matthew 24:39, i.e.to keep the righteous safe in Christ.)

The flood “came” in Mt. 24:39 is the Greek *erchomai* {er'-khom-ahee} = Strong's 2064-“-middle voice of a primary verb (used only in the present and imperfect tenses, the others being supplied by a kindred [middle voice] *eleuthomai* {el-yoo'-thom-ahee}, or [active] *eltho* {el'-tho}, which do not otherwise occur); TDNT - 2:666,257; vb (This is one of the Greek words that is properly translated “coming”).

AV -

- come (616)
- go (13)
- misc (13) [642]
  - 1) to come

1a) of persons; to come from one place to another, to come i.e. to soon appear, make one's appearance soon, come before the public soon.

2) to come, metaphorically

2a) to come into being, arise, come forth, show itself, find place or influence; be established; become known; to come (fall) into or unto to go, to follow one, used before the parousia of Jesus Christ to say that he would come soon: Mt.24:5; Jn.21:22, 23; Acts 1:11; 1Cor.11:26; 2Thess.1:10; Heb.10:37; Rev.1:7, 22:7, 22:20.”

If the intent of these verses had been to describe the “coming” of Jesus to the earth from heaven; the New Testament writers would have used the Greek word *erchomai* {er'-khom-ahee) **NOT PAROUSIA!**

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his *parousia*=(presence). (1 Corinthians 15:23)

For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye before\* our Lord Jesus Christ at his *parousia*=(presence)? (1 Thessalonians 2:19) \*(*mprosten*, should be translated *before*)

**emprosthen** {em'-pros-then} Strong's #1715 from 1722 and 4314; TDNT - omitted,omitted; adv

AV -

- **before** (41)
- in (one's) sight (2)
- of (1)
- against (1)
- in the sight of (1)
- in the presence of, [improperly translated] (1)
- **before Christ at His presence**, i.e. face to face in the presence of Christ (1) [48]
  - 1) **in front, before**
    - 2a) before, i.e. in that local region which is in front of a person or thing
    - 2b) **before, in the presence of**, i.e. opposite to, over against one
  - 2c) **before, in the sight of**
    - 2d) before, denoting rank

To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, in the *parousia*=(presence)\* of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. (1 Thessalonians 3:13) \*(in AV was translated at His coming in 1Thess.3:13).

**en** {en} Strong's #1722 a primary preposition denoting (fixed) position (in place, time or state), and (by implication) instrumentality (medially or constructively), i.e. a relation of rest (intermediate between 1519 and 1537); TDNT - omitted,233; prep.

AV -

- in (1874), should have been at least 1 more
- by (141)
- with (134)
- among (117)
- at (111) should have been at least one less
- on (46)
- through (37)
- misc (321) [2781]
- 1) in, by, with etc.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the *parousia*=(presence) of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. (1 Thessalonians 4:15)

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

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the *parousia*= (presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, (we can only gather together unto him if he is present, not when he is coming) (2 Thessalonians 2:1)

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness=(appearing) of his *parousia*=(presence): (2 Thessalonians 2:8)

This would have been more accurate if it had been rendered: “shall destroy at the appearing of His presence” (in other words, at the very beginning of His Parousia), as *epephaneia* is translated the other 5 times it is used in the New Testament.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed<601>, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy<2673> with the brightness<2015> of his *parousia*=(presence) <3952> (2Th 2:8)

**apokalupto** {ap-ok-al-ooop'-to} Strong's #0601 from 575 and 2572; TDNT - 3:556,405; vb

AV - reveal (26)

- 1) to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up; disclose, make bare
- 2) to make known, make manifest, disclose what before was unknown

**katargeo** {kat-arg-eh'-o} Strong's #2673 from 2596 and 691; TDNT - 1:452,76; vb

AV -

- destroy (5)
- do away (3)
- abolish (3)
- cumber (1)
- loose (1)
- cease (1)
- fall (1)
- deliver (1)
- misc (11) [27]

- 1) to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish; to cease, to pass away, be done away; to be severed from, separated from, discharged from, loosed from any one; to terminate all intercourse with one
- 2) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative; to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency; to deprive of force, influence, power

**epiphaneia** {ep-if-an'-i-ah} Strong's #2015 from 2016; TDNT 9:1,1244; n f

AV -

appearing (5)

brightness (1), (poorly rendered) [6]

- 1) an appearing, appearance; often used of the glorious manifestation of the gods, and especially of their advent to help; in the NT the advent of Christ, -- not only that which has already taken place in the incarnation and by which his presence and power appear in the saving light he has shed upon mankind, but also that illustrious return from heaven to receive His saints unto Himself, which occurred in 70 AD.

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the *parousia*=(presence) of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for **the *parousia*=(presence) of the Lord draws near.** (James 5:7 & 8)

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and *parousia*=(presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. (2 Peter 1:16)

At the time Peter wrote this the Apostles were only “eyewitnesses” of his incarnate ministry. As is clear from the context, this verse uses the word *parousia* to describe Christ’s presence in His incarnation ministry; to translate *parousia* as “coming” in this verse completely distorts the context, as it also does when translated coming in these verses).

And saying, Where is the promise of his *parousia*=(presence)? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation. (2 Peter 3:4)

Looking for and hastening=(hurrying) unto the *parousia*=(presence) of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (2 Peter 3:12)

Yahweh/Yahshua destroys **during His ruling presence**, not while He is “coming”. The literal heavens CANNOT “be on fire and dissolve. This is a symbolic reference to the temple, the place the Jews considered to be “heaven” on earth.

Looking for and hastening unto the *parousia*=(presence) of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved<3089>, and the elements<4747> shall melt<5080> with fervent heat<2741>?(2Pe 3:12)

**luo** {loo'-o} Strong's #3089 a primary verb; TDNT - 4:328,543; vb  
AV -

- loose (27)
  - break (5)
  - unloose (3)
  - destroy (2)
  - dissolve (2)
  - put off (1)
  - melt (1)
  - break up (1)
  - break down (1) [43]
- 1) to loose any person (or thing) tied or fastened: bandages of the feet, the shoes, of bad angels, of a husband and wife joined together by the bond of matrimony, spoken of a single man, whether he has already had a wife or has not yet married.
  - 2) to loose one bound, i.e. to unbind, release from bonds, set free: one bound up (swathed in bandages), bound with chains (a prisoner), discharge from prison, let go
  - 3) to loosen, undo, dissolve, anything bound, tied, or compacted together; an assembly, i.e. to dismiss, break up; Laws, as having a binding force, are likened to bonds; hence to annul, subvert; to do away with, to deprive of authority, whether by precept or act; to declare unlawful; to loose what is compacted or built together, to break up, demolish, destroy; to dissolve something coherent into parts, to destroy; metaph. to overthrow, to do away with

The question that we need to ask here is "what did Peter mean by the Greek word translated into the English word "elements"? The Greek word that Peter uses here is:

**stoicheion** {stoy-khi'-on} Strong's #4747 neuter of a presumed derivative of the base of 4748; TDNT - 7:666,1087; n n

AV -

- element (4)
  - rudiment (2)
  - principle (1) [7]
- 1) the elements, rudiments, primary and fundamental principles of any religion, art, science, or discipline; i.e. of mathematics, Euclid's geometry
  - 2) any first thing, from which the others belonging to some series or composite whole take their rise; an element, first principal 1) the letters of the alphabet as the elements of speech, not however the written characters, but the spoken sounds
  - 3) the heavenly bodies, either as parts of the heavens or (as others think) because in them the elements of man, life and destiny were supposed to reside

Many say, "Let's search out the context and compare Scripture with Scripture to find God's intended purpose on any given passage." So let's do just that and find out what Peter meant by his use of this word.

This word, stoicheion, is used 7 times in the New Testament; twice in the above reference, twice in Galatians 4, twice in Colossians 2, and once in Hebrews 5:12. While discussing certain things about the law Paul states, "Even so we, when we were children, we were in bondage under the elements of the world (of the law). But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements (of the law), whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? [Gal.4:3 & 9, emphasis and comments added]

Paul also uses this word twice in Colossians 2: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments (elements of Jewish law) of the world (Judaism) and not after Christ...Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments (elements of Jewish law) of the world (Judaism), why, as through living in the world (of Jewish law), are ye subject to ordinances (of Jewish law),.." [Col. 2:8 & 20, emphasis and comments added]

By thus comparing Scripture with Scripture just as many demand, we see clearly that the word "elements" in II Peter 3:10-13 is a clear reference to the elements (rudiments or principles) of the Jewish Law i.e. the Jewish temple with its priests and sacrifices. These certainly did burn up and "melt with fervent heat" in the fire that destroyed the temple and the city (Jerusalem) in 70 AD. Truly "everything has burned up"!

And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his parousia=(presence). (1 John 2:28)

Confidence or shame; only in His presence, not while He is somewhere far off "coming".

And now, little children, abide in him; that, **when he shall appear**<5319>, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him **in His parousia**=(presence)<3952>. (1Jo 2:28)

**phaneroo** {fan-er-o'-o} Strong's #5319 from 5318; TDNT - 9:1,1244; vb , AV -

- make manifest (19)
  - appear (12)
  - manifest (9)
  - show (3)
  - be manifest (2)
  - show (one's) self (2)
  - manifestly declare (1)
  - manifest forth (1) [49]
- 1) make actual and visible, realized; to become manifest, be made known; of a person, expose to view, make manifest, to show one's self, appear; to become known, to be plainly recognised, thoroughly understood: who and what one is
  - 2) to make visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, whether by words, or deeds, to make known by teaching, or in any other way

While there are many verses of Scripture that teach a future (to the writer, not to us) second coming (erchomai) of Jesus Christ, we conclude that, in the verses listed above, **the New Testament writers were discussing the things that Jesus Christ would do or be involved in during His ruling presence on the Throne of His glory** [Matthew 19:28, 25:31; Revelation 3:21, 10:7, 11:15-19, 20:4d].

Authors note: For more information about this see the papers "Sitting in the throne of His glory" and "Amos 9:15 on my website: [www.lloyddale.com](http://www.lloyddale.com)