

Matthew 22-05-15a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 15th day of May 2022. We are continuing our study in the gospel of Matthew.

We're in chapter 24. Last week we took a look at the phrase that Jesus uses in verse 14 that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness. To understand what that gospel is, of course, we need to understand what the kingdom is.

And so we started looking at that last week. We're going to continue and expand that study a bit this morning. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study and we'll begin.

Father, it's a wonderful privilege to have another day granted to us, another opportunity to enjoy your provision, your protection, your gracious oversight in every area of our lives, both in our areas of prospering and in our areas of challenge. We know that these are carefully chosen and attuned for us to encourage us in growth and in production. We pray that as we look at this portion of your word together and the concept of the kingdom of your son, the Lord Jesus, that your Holy Spirit will bless the information to each of our hearts.

We're grateful for each one that has joined us here this morning and we pray that our fellowship will be mutually beneficial and affine to each one and that we will come away from our time of fellowship encouraged and better informed and able to be more fruitful in the hours and days ahead. We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.

So this idea of the kingdom, if you remember, was helpfully expanded by looking at it in terms of the context in which we find the Old Testament and New Testament words. The Old Testament word Malkut is related to the word Melech. You can hear the M and the L and the CH or K sound there, Melech, Malkut.

And so the similar relationship in the New Testament with Basileia as kingdom and Basileios as the king. You just change the A to an OS and it becomes the king. At least in classical Greek, it kind of drifts to an AS when you get to later forms of Greek, Basileios, Basileia.

And we sort of summarized our understanding from context that sometimes these words are used to emphasize the kingdom in terms of its domain or its area where people dwell and where the rule of the king is effectual and dominant. Other times, it is a reference to the kingship, the exercise of authority on the part of the king. And in examining this, the application of it is that when we hear talk of kingdom living, kingdom priorities, kingdom people, kingdom programs, and so on, we want to stop and think about the nature of the kingdom that we currently participate in.

We do have a relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the head of all things to the church. Interestingly, he is never labeled king to us, but he is the king.

He is the king of Israel. He is going to be king of the millennial kingdom. He is, by extension, in his association with the Father, you could say he is king of many things.

When you sing Christmas songs, you inevitably hit the line, born the king of angels, which is a strange come to pass since I don't find that phrase in my Bible, but I wouldn't doubt that he's the king of angels in some sense. But it's important for us to figure this out because what is my relationship to kingdom topics? It is talked about a lot. It has been discussed for decades, for generations.

You will remember last time that we were listening to some words from a Pentecostal source that drew out this very helpful distinction between kingship, the authority that the Lord Jesus has in whatever realm relates to his kingship, and the kingdom itself. We realize that while Jesus has authority now, and he says so just before he leaves, what is the Great Commission verse? Remember Matthew 28, 19, and 20? But do you remember what he says right before as you go make disciples of all nations and so on? Remember the first statement he makes right before that? All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. I don't know that he was born the king of angels, but by the time he leaves the incarnation phase of his work, he says, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

So how does he exercise that authority and what is our relationship to it? Well, this is why it is helpful for us to think about his kingship, which exists now, and his kingdom, which is yet future. This helps us not necessarily want to jump on any bandwagon that says let's create a kingdom or let's try to implement an environment. The environment is not yet.

We have our hands full learning to become people who are qualified to function in and serve in the coming kingdom. There is a training period. In the same way, any military service begins by sending their enlisted people or their officers to training.

Are you under authority? Do you salute those of higher rank? Do you learn customs, traditions, skills, philosophies of operation and the rest of it? Of course you do, but you don't really consider yourself to be in the fleet, so to speak, as a naval officer or enlisted or a marine who's in the fleet until your training is completed and you ship out from your training command to your first duty station. When you arrive at your duty station, now you are going to be and do all of the things that have been inculcated over the past many weeks, months, and so on. This is similar, I think, to our relationship to the kingdom of Christ.

Are we citizens of a heavenly kingdom? Paul says we are. He uses that word *palatuma*. Our citizenship is in heaven from whence we await the coming of the king and so on.

So it's helpful to remember that this is a time of preparation. This is a time of equipping. This is a time of learning in anticipation of that phase when, although we are already under the authority of the Lord Jesus in several different ways, functioning in his kingdom as a domain and as an environment is yet future.

The fulfillment of the promises to Israel and our participation, ruling and reigning with Christ, potentially, depending on how well we do. Do we graduate our training? Are we sufficiently skilled? Can we pass the tests that indicate that we understand how to accomplish those things? Or do we need to be demoted and assign some other function that doesn't serve in that way? I think this is a very helpful distinction, and it informs and illuminates many other things in Scripture. Take a look at our passage.

I want to point out four verses in our chapter, Matthew 24. If you have something with which you can write, mark, highlight, or otherwise indicate a notation on your Bible page, you might find it helpful. We're going to be looking at four specific verses in this chapter.

We have seen them, but we're going to take a look at something specifically in them. What got this whole thing started? Why is Jesus pitching the content of Matthew 24? Jesus went out, departed from the temple, and His disciples came to show Him the buildings of the temple. Jesus said, Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another that shall not be thrown down.

Prediction of the Destruction of the Temple. So as He sat on the Mount of Olives, having left Jerusalem, gone across the Kidron Valley, ascended the slope, the same slope that His father David, roughly a thousand years earlier, nine hundred something years earlier, had ascended because the people of Judah rejected Him as king and embraced a false king, Absalom, a pretender king, an anti-king, an instead of king. So as Jesus sits on the Mount of Olives, the disciples, and we know from another gospel that the four disciples here are Peter, Andrew, James, and John, come to Jesus saying, Tell us, when will these things be? What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? Our word here in verse three is your coming.

The word here is parousia, P-A-R-O-U-S-I-A, parousia, P-A-R-O-U-S-I-A. This is often and generally translated as coming or arrival, but its primary meaning is presence. One of the ways we know this is from usage.

You do a word study and find this out, but it's very similar to kingdom in that you have to look at context to decide what is the emphasis from this range of meanings, which one is most prominent when the word is used. So in this case, if you were going to choose between arrival or coming as a meaning or presence, which one does context indicate we should use? These are four disciples sitting in Jesus' presence, talking to him and asking him questions. He has just said there are future events of a startling nature, and so they have come and said, What will be the sign? Would this be the sign of your presence or the sign of your coming? I would suggest that it's rightly translated here,

What will be the sign of your arrival? This is in the sense of return, although the idea of return is not here, but your coming in full kingly glory.

We have a good translation here of parousia. I said it occurs four times in this chapter. The next time is down in verse 27.

This is about where we have arrived in our detailed study. I've told you these things beforehand in verse 25. Therefore, if they say to you, Look, he's in the desert.

Do not go out. Or, Look, he's in the inner rooms. Do not believe it.

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the parousia of the Son of Man be. Once again, it seems to be properly translated here. Lightning doesn't constantly glow in the sky.

It starts in one part of the heavens, and it travels, it moves, and it arrives, it comes to another part of the sky. Starts in the east and flashes to the west. So will the arrival, the coming of the Son of Man be.

Sky was dark, then it's light. There's an absence of the Lord Jesus. Now he is present, but this is emphasis on the beginning of that presence.

It's kind of like, if you've ever thought about, or talked about, or heard about the aorist tense in Greek. Aorist is often discussed because it's not a straight past tense. It's sort of a timeless thing, and it more looks at a happening from a different perspective than we do.

We say, Well, did it happen today? Did it happen yesterday? Has it happened? Was it ongoing in the past? Is it ongoing in the present? We have different modalities that we think of when it comes to verbs. Greeks were a little bit different. So in the aorist, one way to look at aorist tenses is to determine whether they emphasize the beginning of an action, the duration of an action, or the culmination of an action.

And so we have these three different kinds of aorists. There's the ingressive aorist, which seems to focus on the beginning of an action. There is the constative aorist, which is sort of ongoing action in past time.

He was traveling, for example, could be an aorist. Or the culminative aorist, ingressive, constative, or culminative. Kind of makes sense.

Are we looking at the beginning? Are we looking at the totality? Are we looking at the ending, and often by implication, the result? Well, this word is kind of like that, where parousia can refer to the sort of the ingressive idea. This is the start of the presence. How do you start being present? You arrive, right? When I arrive, I am now present.

And so the arrival can be a big deal. You think about the the upcoming parable of the

wise and foolish virgins. A big part of that story is the arrival of the groom, right? Once he arrives, he's now present.

And his presence makes a big difference. Different things happen because the groom has now arrived. So we're good so far in Matthew chapter 24, looking at parousia and understanding its meaning from context to be arrival.

But you'll notice that the context very clearly invests parousia with an arrival meaning. Our next appearance is 10 verses later in verse 37. Jesus says in verse 36, of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. People eating and drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark did not know until the flood came and took them away. So this would be the arrival of the Jesus interrupting people's personal pursuits is similar to the arrival of the flood, right? This is going to be fun to look at because... Let me ask you.

Let me read that verse again. As in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark did not know until the flood came and took them all away. So also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

What do you find if you think about that for a minute? And your clue is up in verse 36, of that day and hour, no one knows. We're looking at the word day here. Notice in verse 36, of the day and the hour, no one knows.

Verse 37, but as the days of Noah were, so also will the parousia of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, do you see this repetition of day, days, days? As in the days before the flood, they were eating, were drinking, were marrying, were giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark and did not know until the flood came and took them all away. What do you think about that? Let me put it this way and I'll give away the answer.

Was the day Noah entered the ark the day the flood came? What was the distance between the day Noah entered the ark? Jesus is not wasting words, He's not being sloppy, He's not being imprecise, He's being very, very accurate. People were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until when? Nope. Marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark.

What is the distance between the day Noah entered the ark and when the flood came? Seven days. Read Genesis. Noah entered the ark, and it sat there.

Seven days. People stopped eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage on the day that Noah entered the ark, and there was a week where they did not know. They did not know, verse 29, until the flood came and took them all away.

So also will the parousia of the Son of Man be. Day, days, days, day. Gotta watch the language.

But for our purposes here, so also will the coming. And I think this is a perfectly good translation. The emphasis is on the arrival.

There is going to be a period where people are going to be uncertain. They're going to stop all of their partying and carousing, and there's going to be a lot of uncertainty. They did not know.

Noah entered the ark, now they don't know what's happening. And they don't know for a period of seven days, then the flood came. Jesus says, this is what his coming, his arrival is going to be like.

Then we have it again, two verses later. Actually, we have it in 37. As in the days of Noah, so also will the parousia of the Son of Man be.

And then he emphasizes it again in 39, did not know until the flood came and took them all away. So also will the coming of the Son of Man be as in the days of Noah. Parousia, two times there, arrival.

Well, this is helpful to us in one way, but it is helpful to us in another way. We know that Matthew 24 is talking about the answer to the question in verse 3, what will be the sign of your coming? These are the conditions. This is what will prevail.

This is what it will look like in terms of the coming of the Son of Man. But we've got a lot more information in the New Testament. So flip over to 1 Corinthians 15.

As soon as I say that, you will remember because you've got some of your pertinent chapters of the Bible memorized. You know the love chapter is 1 Corinthians 13. You know that the faith chapter is Hebrews 11.

You know many of these locations. 1 Corinthians 15 is the resurrection chapter. It's all about Christ being raised from the dead beginning in verse 12.

How does someone you say there's no resurrection? And Paul goes into great detail. We've seen it in our 1 Corinthians study. We are aiming for verse 23.

Start in 22, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ, all shall be made alive, but each one in his own order. Christ, the first fruits. Afterward, those who are Christ's at his parousia, at his parousia, those who are Christ's at his coming.

Now, this is where things get a little bit interesting. If you were going by the definition and application of the word parousia in Matthew 24, would you say Matthew 24's use of the word is talking about the rapture or talking about the second coming? What's Matthew 24 talking about? You've got the tribulation and his coming at the end of the

tribulation, which is the second coming, right? Parousia, as it was in the days of Noah, eating and drinking, marrying, giving, and marriage, till the day Noah disappeared from sight, people didn't know for a period of time, then the flood came. Similarly, you could infer perhaps, now this is not something you want to die for, but you could imagine, you could interpolate or extrapolate that if it's going to be like the days of Noah, and Jesus emphasizes twice that this is what his parousia is going to be like, days of Noah, the day Noah entered the ark and people couldn't see him anymore, and there's a period of time that passes, then the flood comes.

Well, how about the current day people of God disappearing, it is a head-scratcher, and then the tribulation begins and the Son of Man comes, right? A little bit of compression there, but the man of God was visible, he and his family, then they weren't, some time goes by, then the flood comes, people of God today are present, they disappear, there's a period of time, and then the Son of Man comes. That would match in terms of a pattern, wouldn't it? But the parousia in Matthew 24 is very specifically and provably the second coming, right? The coming of the Son of Man. So, if you come to Corinthians, and Paul is using the word, and he says the resurrection is going to occur in stages, each in his own order, Christ the firstfruits has already been raised, then those who are Christ's at his parousia.

This is one of the reasons you have post-tribulation rapture folks who believe that the description in Thessalonians of the dead in Christ rising, those who are alive and remain, rising up to meet them in the air, is coterminous with the second coming, because they take parousia to be a sort of technical term for a single event. Jesus calls it the parousia in Matthew 24, Paul calls it the parousia in 1 Corinthians 15, right? So, we want to put that thought on hold as it were, write it on a yellow sticky, put a pin in it, keep it in mind, something to think about, and let's look at the other uses. Those who are Christ's at his parousia.

If you look at 1 Corinthians 15 in Greek, you see something interesting, and I'm going to pull it up here because I didn't bring my Greek text to the port-a-pulpit. But this is 1 Corinthians 15, 23, and I'm interested in the preposition that is used with parousia, each in his own order, the firstfruit Christ, then those of Christ, and the preposition here is en. En in Greek is translated in, by, or with.

Quick pop quiz, what are the two usages of parousia? What are its two meanings? We've seen arrival or coming, consistently used in Matthew 24, I like that translation, it's very good. What is its other meaning? Presence. Presence.

Now let me run something past you here just as a theory, as a theory, as a hypothesis that we can work on testing. Each one in his own order, Christ the firstfruits, afterward, those who are Christ's in his presence. The preposition here is en.

We didn't have en used anywhere in Matthew 24, but we do have it here. So en is not

typically translated at, it's translated in, by, or with. Raised in his presence.

Whenever the presence of the Lord appears, those who are Christ's will be raised. So we'll think about that. Look in the next chapter, 1 Corinthians 16, verse 17.

I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied, for they refreshed my spirit and yours, therefore acknowledge such men. Ah, interesting. If parousia is going to be a word like rapture or second advent, I am glad about the rapture of Stephanas, I'm glad, I'm happy about the second advent of Stephanas, Fortunatus.

This is parousia used of these three individuals who came from Corinth to visit Timothy. It is translated, I'm glad about the coming. I would submit to you though, that here the emphasis is more on the presence.

Paul says, I am glad that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus are here. What was lacking in your part they supplied. What was lacking, they have brought fellowship, they've brought comfort, they've brought encouragement, they've brought news, they might've brought some contributions, maybe some financial contributions, but the book of first Corinthians, and you remember when we studied it, there were a lot of problems in Corinth, and Paul spends the bulk of this letter in correction and instruction and in rebuke, and Paul would be largely disappointed in that group, but here are three worthies, three faithful, growing, fruitful, balanced, wonderful men who come to visit him, and he says, you know, what was lacking they have supplied.

They are that faithful remnant out of your church, and them being present here has restored my soul, it's given me encouragement. Not just them arriving, it's one thing to swing by for a quick visit and say, well, I've arrived. It's something else to be present, to spend time, right? So I would see the presence idea in both of these first Corinthians usages, first Corinthians 15, 23, and first Corinthians 16, 17, those who are Christ will be raised in his presence, and this is his physical presence.

Jesus said, where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst. What kind of presence is that? That's a spiritual presence, right? So now we distinguish between two kinds of presence, two kinds of arrival. If two or three gather in my name, Jesus said, there am I in the midst.

He arrives in some sense and is a presence in a spiritual sense when believers gather in his name, right? So here's my thought for the first session. Going back now and thinking about the Lord Jesus and his kingship, his authority, which is invisible and spiritual, and his kingdom, which is visible and physical, right? They are inextricably joined together. You can't really have one without the other.

You can't always be an invisible king. Ultimately, this needs to be expressed in a

kingdom, and you can't have a physical visible kingdom if you don't have the king visibly and physically present. But you can acknowledge the authority in advance, and you can welcome, accept, and function with a view toward that authority.

In the same way, you think about the presence of the Lord Jesus, the parousia of the Lord Jesus, which will one day be visible and physical, right? But can now be spiritual and invisible. Do you see the connection between Basileia, kingship, kingdom, and parousia, presence, and arrival? Paul says, I labor for you until Christ be formed in you. Obviously, a spiritual presence.

What is this? Christ in you, the hope of glory, the one who has my words and keeps them. He it is that loves me. I and my father will come to him and make our home within.

Presence, invisible and spiritual presence, where one day in the kingdom of the Son and ultimately the kingdom of the Father, there will be a physical and visible presence to which we look forward and for which we are preparing now by conditioning ourselves to the invisible and the spiritual presence and power of the Lord Jesus. And by extension, God, the Father, we are preparing, we are growing and maturing. We are turning into people who will be qualified to dwell and function in the physical and literal kingdom.

Christ at home in your hearts, Paul says. If he can be at home in our hearts, we can be at home in his kingdom. Makes sense? And it also helps us stay calm when it comes to talk of imminency, talk of kingdom now, and if we build it, he will come, and we need to get busy and involve ourselves in social change.

More about this when we come back from the break, but it is helpful to understand the difference. And it's a positive difference. It's a wonderful connection between what is present now in the invisible and spiritual realm and what will be present later in the visible and physical realm.

One prepares us for the other. The message of Noah, Noah was a preacher of righteousness, so we know that he sent out a message before the flood. That was an invisible idea, and people didn't take it seriously.

They didn't take it on board. They didn't believe it. They didn't prepare for it.

Instead, they went about their own business, Jesus says in Matthew 24. They went about their normal means of self-gratification. It doesn't say they planted and plowed and harvested.

It says they ate and drank, they feasted, and they celebrated any occasion such as a marriage. That was where they found their pleasure, and they did not take seriously an invisible spiritual reality that would soon become a visible and physical reality in terms of the flood. The one who communicated that truth disappeared.

Then they didn't know. Then the flood came. We don't want to be unaware.

We don't want to fail to be watchful, fail to take seriously the invisible spiritual priorities that will one day invest us with opportunities for service and function in the future literal kingdoms of the Son and kingdom of the Father. Let's pause here and take a break. When we come back, we have much more to see in this.

We've got quite a few more passages to look at Parousia. We're going to see a little bit. The Pentecostals were quoting Professor Ladd.

Well, this is one of his books, The Blessed Hope. George Eldon Ladd was part of the helpful distinction in terms of kingship versus kingdom. He has some more good things that we'll look at in our second session.

Let's pause here and take our break.