

Matthew 22-05-15b

We're looking at the parousia, the arrival, the coming, and or the presence of the Lord Jesus as it is revealed to us in scripture. We've seen Matthew chapter 24, verse 3, verse 27, verse 37, and verse 39, where the Lord Jesus himself describes his coming, his eruption into the human experience, into the earthly sphere for the second time. We've also seen the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, 23, and in 1 Corinthians 16, 17, talking about the parousia of the Lord Jesus, and arguably, in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 23, talking about Christ, the firstfruits, afterward, those who are of Christ in his presence.

In his presence. And this helps disconnect the sort of technical link that you might be tempted to make to say that, well, those who are Christ's are going to be raised at the second coming spoken of in Matthew 24. The Corinthians didn't have a copy of Matthew, I don't think.

But for us, I think it is helpful to see that this is not a technical term for the second coming. It simply means anyone's coming. And we saw this demonstrated in the next chapter, chapter 16, verse 17, when Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus bring joy to Paul's heart upon their parousia.

And just by way of preposition associated with it, he says, I was glad, I am glad about the coming, about the parousia, the presence of. I'm glad they're here. I'm glad they came.

I'm glad they're here. And it is recognizing that they arrived, but it is their ongoing presence. They came and stayed a while.

And the preposition there is *epi*, upon the presence. I am glad, and that's what it's about or upon. My gladness rests on the presence of these three individuals who have filled up a lack on the part of the Corinthians.

I started to say a lack on the part of the first Corinthians. It's the same group, I think, in first and second Corinthians. But this brings us now to another usage by Paul.

If you flip forward to Philippians, this is going to be Philippians chapter 1, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians. And we're going to be down in verse 26. Remember Paul's discussion, you can't forget it.

I'm hard-pressed. On the one hand, I would love to depart and be with the Lord. On the other hand, I know it's needful to stay here and be with you.

So in verse 23, I'm hard-pressed between the two. Having a desire to depart and be with Christ, far better. Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is needful for you.

Being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you for all your progress and joy of faith. All for your progress and joy of faith. My presence is going to

contribute to your joy, sort of in the same way the presence of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus contributed to his joy.

So that, verse 26, your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my parousia, through my parousia again, through my presence with you again. He's not currently present with the Philippians. He's not in Philippi.

That's why he's writing a letter. But he says, it's needful for me to remain so that I can come and be present with you. And my presence with you will contribute to your progress and your joy of faith.

The preposition here is dia, dia means through. Diameter, that's the distance through the center of a circle from edge to edge. Diameter, dia, through.

So through my presence, it's not just his coming that's going to contribute to their progress and joy of faith. It's his ongoing presence. Certainly he's going to arrive at some point, but the emphasis here is on the duration of his stay and what his presence will contribute, not what his arrival will contribute, right? Really, context helps us understand that.

If you flip over a few more pages to past Colossians to first Thessalonians, chapter two, verse 17, we brethren having our verses 19, if you're writing these down, first Thessalonians 2, 19, starting in 17, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, we endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore, we wanted to come to you, even I, Paul, time and again, but Satan hindered us. For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his parousia, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ? And when it says in the presence, they're actually translating a word that means, it's the Greek word, and right in the middle of that, you have in, in the beginning, our same preposition in, by, or with, is face to face with, before the face of, and so that this is, is our, our hope and joy and crown of rejoicing.

Is it not even you? Impress then the Lord Jesus Christ, and then you have in his presence. This is again, the preposition in, it doesn't say at his coming or upon his coming. Remember when Paul was talking about the arrival of, uh, Fortunatus and Stephanus and Achaicus, he was glad upon it, but this is in it, in the presence of, isn't our joy and crown and hope you all before Christ in his presence.

So the context here says it, it's not just, Paul's going to be happy about the Thessalonians when Jesus first comes back, but then, well, that, that was just when he came. It's in the presence. They are all going to be there.

This will be a durative, ongoing hope and joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus. This will go on as long as you're in the presence, if you're in the presence,

if you're qualified to be there. Notice night and day, praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith in a first Thessalonians three, 10, Paul wants not just to arrive with the Thessalonians, but to be present with them.

So, uh, on down then in verse 13, chapter three, verse 13, may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you. That's first 12. This is Paul's prayer increase and abound in love toward one another, just as we do so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and father.

And it says at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. Once again, this is not at, this is in, in the presence. It's not like, boy, I'm really sweating what Jesus is going to think when he first comes back.

This is with all of the sanctified ones in his presence ongoing. This is parousia in the presence sense with an emphasis. Certainly the arrival is in view.

Jesus hasn't arrived yet, but when he arrives and when we are entered into his presence, what is the experience going to be? May the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we to you so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness. Impress then before very same word we had up above before our God and father in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. Makes a little bit more sense there, doesn't it? It's not just, wow, there's going to be great happiness at the arrival of the Lord Jesus.

It's in his presence. This is the thousand years of the millennial kingdom. This is the presence of the lamb on the throne in the kingdom of the father in his presence.

We developing love now has a durative effect in the future. It's not just at the coming. It's in the presence.

You see the difference? It's really important to pay attention to the context when these phrases occur. Flip over to first Thessalonians chapter four, verse 15, start in 13. I do not want you to be ignorant brethren concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus. Jesus, for this, we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the parousia of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. Different preposition here.

This is not N. It's not even Epi. This is Ace, E-I-S, which means into, unto, or with a view toward. What is the context here? The context is time.

Time is going to pass Ace, unto, or until a certain event. The context tells us very clearly those who are alive and remain unto the coming. So this you could say, well, they're

going to be alive and remain until the presence.

But this until idea pretty much terminates with the coming of the Lord Jesus. There's a whole new kind of existence after that. Well, by no means precede.

So we're talking about sequence and timing here. And so this is arrival, unto the arrival, the coming of the Lord. And you have a similar use here of parousia as you have in Matthew 24.

However, Matthew 24 is the arrival coming and inception of presence of the Lord Jesus to Israel. Here it is the inception arrival coming of the presence of the Lord Jesus to those in the church. Make sense? It is not a technical term for either the rapture or the second coming because the Lord Jesus arrives in Bethlehem.

For the first advent, he arrives at the rapture to take the church to himself. He is going to arrive at the second coming to end the tribulation, imprison Satan, blow away the Antichrist, and begin the visible and physical implementation of his kingdom. So that's 415 of Thessalonians.

And then another page over in chapter 5, verse 23. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. Remember in the presence with all the saints that we saw just earlier.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be preserved blameless at the coming.

It's not at. It's not even until. This is N-E-N, in the presence.

May the God of peace sanctify you completely. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. Obviously, he's going to have to come back for that presence to be established.

But when he is present, this is a very similar idea to what we just saw up in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 19. In his presence, looking ahead to the durative state of the future. Not just, am I going to survive the initial blast of the coming of the Lord Jesus? Will I be blameless when he arrives? Can I stand blameless and be preserved blameless in his presence? I'm not asked to leave.

Friend, where's your wedding garment, right? Preserved, blameless. Your whole spirit, soul, and body in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. I would strongly argue that we need to scratch out at the coming and put in the presence.

In 2.19 and 3.13 and 5.23, without blame in his presence. You've got the 2 Thessalonian epistle right there. And in chapter 2, verse 1, now brethren concerning the parousia of

our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, we ask you not to be soon shaken in mind.

Concerning the parousia and our gathering together to him, which usage of parousia do you see here? What is the emphasis? What does context tell us? When are we gathered into his presence? Is it throughout his presence? Are we constantly being gathered? Are there still animals filing into the ark? This is at the coming, right? Concerning the coming. We implore you concerning the coming, the arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, not to be shaken in mind or troubled by spirit or word or by letter as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Once again, you've got a time element here.

Has the arrival already taken place? Et cetera. So very clearly there in 2 Thessalonians, that is the coming, but look further down here. The verse 6, you know, what is restraining that he may be revealed in his own time.

The mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only that which now restrains will do so until it is taken out of the way. Then verse 8, this is our next occurrence.

Verse 8 and verse 9, both contain parousia. Then the lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will consume with the breath of his mouth and destroy with the epiphany, the epiphaneia of his parousia, the brightness of his coming, the epiphany, the revelation, the glorious revelation is, this is his presence with an emphasis on his arrival, right? Very clear in the context. At the point that Jesus arrives, comes, appears, the brightness of that appearance is going to destroy the lawless one.

He will be, literally it says he will be nullified. That's what the word means, rendered non-operational. This is literally what it says in the lexicon, rendered non-operational, nullified, no longer having an effect by the brightness of his coming.

Now the very next verse, verse 9 uses parousia again, but this is not the parousia of the Lord Jesus. This is the parousia of the lawless one. The parousia of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all power, signs and wonders, arrival or presence.

It takes time for signs and wonders to be perpetrated. It takes time for people to view those and be convinced by them. Power, signs and lying wonders, all unrighteous deception among those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.

Let me just say as an aside here that there are so many things going on. I may just have to do a special on 2 Thessalonians 2 and I think I will. I think I'll save the point I was about to make for that special because there is so much meat in here and I'll rabbit trail myself if I just let me tell you there's treasure here for the taking.

But parousia in verse 9, this is the presence during the time that the lawless one holds

sway, the beast, we call the antichrist, during the time of the tribulation, particularly the first half. His presence is going to be persuasive. His parousia, not just his arrival, not his coming, it's his presence.

By the way, parousia is para, which means alongside. Remember the paraclete, paracletos, to call alongside like a paramedic. You want a medic alongside you or alongside a doctor's services.

Paramedic. Alongside. Para and the ousias part or ousia is a form of amy, which means to be.

It's so parousia and we're going to see this in our upcoming usage where I remember when Paul was talking about his presence and what people thought of his presence or the strength of his letters and so on, that he's weak in presence. This is, he actually uses the word apousia, apa is away from, remember apostasis, the standing away, apa is away or from, and look at Philippians chapter two, Philippians 2.12. Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my parousia only, that's our word. Philippians 2.12, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my apousia, parousia, apousia.

Not just when Paul arrives or comes, but in his presence or in his absence. And his whole discussion about being present on earth or absent from the body and present with the Lord has this same idea, but being parousia, being alongside with the idea of coming alongside actually, or being away from, absent is there. But for our final passage, turn to James chapter five, Hebrews James, James chapter five, verse seven, therefore be patient brethren until the coming of the Lord, until the parousia.

The word until here is our old friend, haos, H-E-O-S. Remember in Acts 1.8, when power comes upon you through the Holy Spirit, you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, even until, haos, the end of the age, haos, until, it's an adverb of time, haos. That's what we have here.

Be patient until the parousia of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. Verse eight, you also be patient, establish your hearts for the parousia of the Lord is at hand, at hand.

The coming of the Lord is near, engus means near, E-G-G-U-S. This is a geeken, a form of a goose. At hand, it can be time or it can be geography, it can be space.

And it's used both ways almost equally. For example, you can just make a note next to James there, the coming of the Lord is at hand. You have the same statement in Philippians chapter four, verse five by the apostle Paul, let your kindness, let your moderation be known to all.

The Lord is engus, the Lord is near. Now, what kind of nearness? At hand, we typically

say the time is at hand, but somebody or something can also be at hand, right? It can be spatial. So without using the word *parousia*, what is the concept here in Philippians chapter four, verse five? Let your gentleness, your kindness, your moderation be evident, be known to all men.

Why? Because the rapture could happen at any point or because the presence of the Lord is near. I think it is a far more effective exhortation if we are tempted to be short, if we're tempted to be impatient, if we're tempted to be unkind, if we're tempted to be bitter or vindictive or commit other sins of the tongue against our fellow believers or all men, let your gentleness, your lack of vitriol, your lack of force, your lack of opposition in the sense of being strongly derisive of others and so on. What is a more likely deterrent to that? At some point, we don't know of rapture or the fact that the Lord Jesus is at hand.

He's near. His presence is here. If we have His words and keep them and we love Him, then He's present with us.

If He's present with us, how should we act? Is He going to remain with us if we are not gentle, if we're not kind, if we're not tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven us, if we're not temperate, if we're not careful in the use of our tongue and in the expression of attitudes? Let me read you, I mentioned just before the break that George Eldon Ladd has this book called *The Blessed Hope*. I love this book and I thoroughly disagree with his conclusion, but I love his book anyway. I want to read you something out of his introduction.

This is George Eldon Ladd. He was Professor of New Testament History and Biblical Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary back in the 1950s. This is copyright 1956 by Eerdmans, but the line of reasoning that he pursues is different than many pre-tribulational, pre-millennial types with whom he has conversed.

He says here, this is kind of in the middle of his introduction, the author trusts that this study will not be interpreted primarily as an attack on pre-tribulationists or pre-tribulationism. It is not his desire to attack anyone, but to encourage devout study of the Word of God. Several of the author's colleagues at the Fuller Theological Seminary devoutly hold a pre-tribulation position.

Two of them have contributed helpful criticisms and valuable suggestions to this study. The author certainly is not attacking them, nor any others who hold the same position. Because of this ironic purpose, the names of authors and the sources of quotations of those who hold a different position have usually been omitted.

Since the book is designed to help laymen as well as pastors in their study of the scriptures, the paraphernalia and jargon of scholarship have been laid aside and technical questions have been avoided as far as possible. We have frequently quoted

from pre-tribulation writers, but we trust always in a kindly and generous spirit. In fact, one of the main objectives of the book is to promote courteous discussion of the problem.

We would set forth the claim that those who hold that the scripture teaches the church will be raptured only at the end of the tribulation should have full liberty to hold that position even as we would allow others the right to hold a pre-tribulation rapture. For the most part, the Word of God is not explicit about the order of events. Matthew 24 says nothing about the resurrection, which is an interesting observation.

We've been in Matthew 24 for some weeks. There is no mention of resurrection anywhere in it, interestingly. The book of Revelation says nothing about the rapture of the church, nothing explicit.

I think a lot of people see it in chapter 4, verse 1. John comes up here and watches the rest of the unfolding events from a heavenly perspective, but that's an inference. Paul's epistles say nothing about the resurrection of the unrighteous. We don't really know much about the resurrection of the rest of the dead until you get to Revelation chapter 20.

If John had clutched his chest not finished after chapter 19, we wouldn't have any comment about what's going to happen to the unrighteous. You'd have to go back to the sheep and goats judgment or something. But Paul's epistles say nothing about the resurrection of the unrighteous.

Our problems arise when we begin to ask questions which were not in the minds of the authors. And that's a very helpful point. Don't press a passage of scripture to explain something that wasn't a part of the author's thinking or the Holy Spirit's purpose in putting that passage in the Bible in the first place.

We hold that pre-tribulationism is an inference and not the explicit teaching of the Word of God. Therefore, it is not to be identified with the blessed hope, which is the blessed hope and glorious appearing. That's where he gets the title of his book.

Anyway, I appreciate that ironic approach. We're on the same team. Faithful men will disagree.

We'll understand things differently. We shouldn't be at each other's throats over it or break fellowship. There ought to be a courteous and helpful interaction so that all of us can move closer to the truth.

I certainly have not always achieved that worthy goal, but it is something devoutly to be wished. Well, having said this now, we've taken an extended look at this idea just as we did with kingdom and kingship. Are we looking at the arrival and are we concerned with the timing? When is it going to happen? All of these discussions that have taken place,

pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib, pre-wrath, when is the Lord Jesus going to come and collect the church? Is it one and the same with the second coming or not? I would suggest, I would submit, I would encourage and exhort that when we think about the parousia of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is certainly a coming and it is certainly a beginning, but the emphasis in the word is *amén*, the word that means to be, and *para* is alongside the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We say, I want to be ready for the rapture. Are you ready for the rapture? I would amend that slightly to say, are we ready for the presence? Are we ready to dwell in the ongoing presence? Can we stand *emprosthen*, *e-m-p-r-o-s-t-h-e-n*, before God, before the Lord Jesus Christ in the company of the saints, blameless in our body, in our soul, and in our spirit? Are we ready? Are we preparing? Are we thinking about the presence? And in the same way that thinking about the kingship of the Lord Jesus now is helpful to prepare for the kingdom of the Lord Jesus in the future, thinking about his actual spiritual presence in us and with us now is very helpful in learning and preparing for ongoing dwelling in his actual physical presence in the future, the kingdom of the Son, kingdom of the Father, and to keep ourselves aware. And this is why I wanted to close with Philippians chapter four, verse five.

The Lord is at hand. You can read that multiple ways. His parousia is near, as James says in 5.7 and 5.8. Be patient with a view toward, unto the parousia.

Well, am I patient because I'm thinking the rapture might happen later today or tomorrow, or am I patient with a view toward the presence of the Lord Jesus? *Amén*, into, unto, with a view toward. And the preposition there in James, is until, looking time-wise, but our emphasis in passage after passage is the way to be patient is to start thinking about that presence now. We think about the authority of the Lord Jesus, and we think about his invisible and spiritual presence.

It's going to be pretty hard to be a rascal if I am constantly reminded of and reminding myself of the presence of the Lord Jesus in the room by my side, his parousia, his presence is here and now. This is how he can tell Pilate, my kingship, my kingdom is not visible. And this is why he can tell the disciples, watch out when someone says it's over here or it's over there.

For the protracted period of time, it is going to be invisible and spiritual. There's coming a day when it will be visible and physical. And you'll have no doubt when it comes as the lightning goes from the East to the West, the physical parousia is going to be like that.

It is unmistakable. So what a helpful, practical piece of application for us to remind ourselves in the course of conversation, in the course of planning our day, of establishing our goals for the week or whatever it may be. What are our priorities? What are we going to consider important by way of our values? Considering the parousia, the presence of the Lord Jesus now, and the parousia, the coming at the rapture for us in the future,

whatever the timing may be, even if we were to get it wrong, and I don't think we have, but for those who do have it wrong.

And if we were the ones that had it wrong, if we live in the light of the presence of the Lord Jesus now and his coming to take us to himself in the future, whenever that may be, what kind of people do we turn out to be? So helpful, so motivating. The Lord is at hand. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the power that it has in the hands of your Holy Spirit to cleanse us, the washing of water by the word, to transform us by the renewing of our minds, give us a different foundation for our thinking, a different perspective, a different set of priorities and goals and values, thoroughly conditioned by the presence and power of the Lord Jesus both now and in the ages to come as our Savior, we as his representatives on this earth, and those who are in preparation for coming are given opportunities to reflect your glory and to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus, to serve and to participate in all of the wonderful things that are beyond our imagination at this time, but for which we can be equipped, and even now we can practice the skills as we seek to bear fruit and produce every good work, those that you have foreordained that we should walk in them. We pray that our study this morning will contribute to that goal, and we pray for each one who has joined us that there will be a special blessing and opportunity to reflect and to apply the truths that have blessed us this morning from your word. We pray these things in