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THE PAROUSIA, EPIPHANEIA AND BASILEA

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We are continuing in the series of discussion on the blessed Hope. In the last edition, we saw that the church (the overcoming church) is to experience a complete change of nature, from human to divine. Not from humanity to another humanity, but from the human nature to the divine nature, which nature up till the time of the revelation of the church, the exclusive sphere of the manifestation of the Most High God.

The divine derives from the immortal realm. All other realms are mortal. The glorious event of the lifting of the Church to divinity is the grand finale of the work of redemption. The prophetic word indicates that the power of the Most High God will accomplish this by an overshadowing from without and by a quickening from within.

Reviewing the last meditation further, we observed that He who became flesh to lay it down in atoning sacrifice was in His resurrection raised to the glory of the divine nature, which he derives from the immortal and invisible God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is a kind of a for-runner. He exemplifies what shall be. We would change to be like Him; not Him changing again to become flesh and blood like we are.

God has marked out in His redemption schedule when our change will take place. In the closing part of the last meditation, we identified that this change is bound up with the Lord's Second Advent. The Second Advent was shown to have three distinct phases: Parousia, Epiphaneia and Basilea. We shall take up discussions on these three forth with.

Come with me to Mathew 24. We will first of all locate the words use to describe these three periods associated with the Second Advent. That done, we will commence discussions on them.

¹And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. ²And Jesus said unto them, see ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.

³And 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 coming, and of the end of the world?

The word translated "coming" is the Greek word Parousia. It is more appropriate to translate it "Presence". Taking a careful reading of the third verse (Mt.24:3) we are sure to notice that there was a three-fold question asked by the disciples, viz.; when shall these things be that you have just talked about? What shall be the sign of your presence (of your Parousia) and of the end of the age? The word "world" in verse 3 ought to be rendered "age", as newer translations do. So the third question relates to the sign of the end of the age.

That is the first occurrence of the word Parousia in relation to the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. Another occurrence is in verse 37 of the same chapter. Here again, the Greek word "Parousia" is translated as "coming" rather than "presence", a more appropriate term.

We would reproduce verse 35. Jesus was answering the three-fold question asked Him by his disciples in verse 3 He says;

³⁵Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. ³⁶But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. ³⁷But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

So, if we are to read verse 37 putting the word Parousia instead of coming, it will read this way: "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the Parousia of the Son of Man be". Take notice that the days of Noah is a reference to the time period when Noah began to preach that a judgement was about to come. So, the days of Noah is not the day he entered into the ark but all the time of his ministry prior to the time the judgement set in. Jesus says His presence through His word and spirit during the first phase of the Second Advent will serve this generation in the manner in which Noah's ministry served the people of his day. It was then a time of warning of a forth-coming judgement; of a working towards the saving of his household of faith and the related program of building an ark. It is prophetically so today.

Now, we shall move on to take references that relate to the second time period: the Epiphaneia, which simply means, "the bright shining". "The manifestation". "the unveiling of that which was previously hidden". So, come with me to Titus 2 where we find the phrase "the blessed hope". In that same context, is to be found the word Epiphaneia, used in relation to the Second Advent Titus 2:11-13

¹¹For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, ¹²Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; ¹³Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ

That word "appearing" is translated from the Greek word "Epiphaneia". If we turn to 2 Timothy 4 we find the same word Epiphaneia in the first and in the eighth verses 2 Timothy 4:1-8

¹I CHARGE thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and in his kingdom.

Incidentally, the third phase of the Second Advent of Christ is also found in the first verse of 2Timothy 4 the word "Basilea", translated kingdom). The word "appearing" here is Epiphaneia and it is assigned to the second phase of the Second Advent. Notice the close connection between what is said in the upper part of the verse and what we are now concentrating upon. The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead. The word "the quick" means the living. He shall judge the quick and the dead during his "Epiphany" and in his "Basilea". Basilea, as we said, means, kingdom. The reference is to the millennial reign of Christ (Head and body) over the earth in the age to come, spanning a thousand years.

So, there is going to be a judgement of the living and of the dead, and we are told it is during his Epiphaneia and his Basilea. In this connection too, noting that the period called "Epiphaneia" will be the time when the church will enter into the fullness of her inheritance, Paul admonishes Timothy further. We will read verses 6-8 in order to get the flow of thought. Paul says

⁶For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: ⁸Hence forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: (Which day? we may ask. We find the answer in the next statement he makes. He says): and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (that love His Epiphaneia)

So, the day in reference is the time period of the Epiphaneia, the day of the great unveiling of Christ in the earth. And like we showed in the last edition, it is the time when Christ comes in power and great glory to exalt the church, and to change their vile bodies to be conformed to his own glorious body. Let us recall that there is an aspect of the Lord's work which he does to fit us for that glory: the perfection of our character (a sort of moral resurrection) until we are completely delivered from sin and sin effects. And then, the Epiphaneia will set in.

The Basilea is the kingdom. We can see in Mathew 19:28 read and considered along with Luke 22:28, 29, the reference to the kingdom of heaven, the rule and reign of Christ with His exalted church over all the earth. Another reference is Mathew 25: 31.

We begin to round up. There is the Parousia, it is the first period of time in the Second Advent of Christ. It is characterised by the fact that that time period is measurably unknown to the church, completely unknown to the world, and begins to become clear only to those among God's people who are walking with him faithfully (Mathew 24:27 refers). And the Epiphaneia is when this presence hidden for a specific purpose (which we will be looking at in the next edition) shall be unveiled to the world. In the next edition we shall be seeing God's purpose in the Parousia and the Epiphaneia.

May the Lord bless you and cause his face to shine upon you and bring you to a closer walk with Him, in Jesus name. Amen