

**THE LORD'S SECOND
COMING AND YOU**

THE LORD'S SECOND COMING AND YOU

INTRODUCTION

When after the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden, God slew an animal and used the skin to clothe man; He revealed his commitment towards the human race and His intention to redeem man. That slain animal was a type of the Lamb of God that was slain from the foundation of the world for the remission of our sins (John 1:29; Revelation 13:8). Since that event, God has been working out the various phases of His redemptive plan in the earth. The Psalmist says in Psalm 74:12 *God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.*

As God's instrumental agency in creation and redemption, the Lord Jesus Christ has always been involved in the affairs of men. He has been the One behind all of the Father's activities in redemption since the fall of man. As a Spirit being he had mainly operated from the invisible sphere. He sometimes made himself known in angelic appearances to individuals as occasions demanded (Genesis 18:1-2; Joshua 5:13-15 for example).

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For this reason the Lord Jesus Christ is said to be *the Coming One*, the One that comes and keeps coming to man in relation to the work of lifting humanity from the fall.

Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians in the words of Hebrews 10:36-37...*For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry.* Yes, the Lord is *the Coming One* (Revelation 1:8). Mankind waits eagerly for him. **He alone** is the Solution to all of man's problems. *Look unto him all the ends of the earth and be ye saved* (Isaiah 45:22).

All of the comings of the Lord to the earth and to mankind are associated with the outworking of the redemption plan. Nothing is misplaced. He comes and will keep coming until redemption is fully accomplished; until the ages carved out by the Father for this purpose run their course. Yes! When there stands upon the earth a body of people redeemed and brought to the fullness of Christ, the purpose of all of the Lord's comings would have been fully realized.

Then the Lord will no longer be described as *the One who is to come* (or *the Coming One*) but *the One Who art, and wast, and forever shall be* (Revelation 15:5), for all of his glory and power can then be revealed to mankind through that body of people. May all glory, honour and power be ascribed to his holy name.

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How then does the Lord come to us? In what ways does he come?

THE MANNER OF THE LORD'S COMING

We can distinguish between two forms of the Lord's coming unto his people. The first, which is the usual way in which he comes, is his coming in the outpouring of His Word and of His Spirit. This is described in scriptures as the coming of the Lord "*as rain upon the earth*".

Let us first read Hosea 5:15-6:3, which shows that the Lord comes unto his people as rain. Thereafter, we shall mention other passages that show that the rain is a type of the revelation of the word of God and the operations of the Holy Spirit. Hosea 5:15-6:3

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn; and he will heal us; he hath smitten and he will bind us up.

After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the

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*morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain,
as the latter and former rain unto the earth.*

So the Lord comes to his people as the rain, “as the latter and former rain unto the earth”. Isaiah 55:10-11 reveal that the word proceeding out of the mouth of God is as “rain sent to water the earth and to cause the things that are sown in it to bud”. So also in John 7:37-39, we are made to see that the operations of the Holy Spirit are as the release of mighty rivers of water.

Thus, from these and other passages (such as Deuteronomy 32:2; Zechariah 10:1-5), we understand the word “*rain*” to connote, in spiritual symbolism, such things as the revelation of the word of God and the impartation of the life that such word produces; the gifts and operations of the Holy Spirit making Christ known and revealing his power and glory in the experiences of his people.

As rain, the Lord comes to his people seasonally. The Bible talks about *times and seasons that the Father has kept in his power* (or in His control) (Acts 1:7). Hosea 6:3 also speaks of his coming as seasonal rains, as the *latter* and the *early* rain upon the earth.

The import of this for us as believers, is that there are times within the course of the church age that God has prepared as special periods for the outpouring of his word and of his Spirit unto his people, times when

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the Lord's coming and presence among his people as the rain is in a measure that is beyond the ordinary.

When such special times are upon the church, we are enjoined to seek the Lord in a manner that is more than the ordinary in order to have such encounters with the Lord as He has earmarked for that season.

Zechariah 10:1 says *Ask ye of the Lord rain at the time of the latter rain.* In Isaiah 55:6, the prophets says *Seek ye the Lord when he may be found, call upon him when he is near.* The Lord himself says in Luke 21:28, *And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.* And in Hebrews 10:25, we are told that we should gather unto the Lord *so much the more as ye see the day approaching.*

Yes! There are favourable times, divinely appointed times, when the Lord brings divine interventions upon the church and those who seek him are able to come to a new level of experience in him that hundreds of years of human labour **cannot** produce (2 Peter 3:8). May we know the day of our visitation (Luke 19:44) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In between these seasonal periods of rain are also times of refreshing bringing enlightenment to the church (Acts 3:19). The Lord always come to his people whenever they seek his face and prepares their hearts to meet with him.

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Besides these, the Bible speaks plainly of his coming in a visible bodily form so that a people are able to see and associate with him. Because this coming relates to a bodily visible appearance, this is more commonly known and referred to.

Two unique occasions are revealed in the Holy Scriptures and may be referred to as the first and second advent.

In what is called the *first advent*, the Lord that had been coming to man and outworking redemption in the earth from the invisible sphere, took on a visible human form. John 1:14 says *...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.*

That coming of the Lord is most vital to realizing the redemption plan.

The time had come for the true Lamb of God to be slain for the sin of the world. The only one qualified to be man's redeemer (one in the same form as man, who share in the human nature, but proved to be without sin) should lay down his life as a ransom (Mathew 20:28).

Hence the Lord Jesus Christ had to come into the world as a man. He emptied himself of all celestial glory in order to become man's redeemer. Galatians 4:4 says *...But when the fullness of the time was*

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come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

Before this time, the Lord Jesus Christ had appeared to individuals in the semblance of men, but he had never had to give up his Spirit nature and existence. He had never appeared on the earth for a permanent dwelling as he did in the first advent.

What a great sacrifice the Lord made for us! For our sakes, he that was rich in divine glory became poor by taking on human nature. And being found in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself still, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8). Isaiah 53:8 says *he was cut off from the land of the living, who shall declare his generation?*

But, blessed be the name of the Lord! The one that was slain for us has been raised from the dead. God did not allow his holy One to see corruption (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27; 13:35). Christ having died *dieth no more* (Romans 6:9).

He has not only been raised from the dead, he has been exalted to the highest heaven. He now sits at the right hand of power. As a life-giving Spirit, he is able to save unto the uttermost them that come to God by him (Hebrews 7:25).

We are told that the one that appeared to take away our sins is coming again, this time not as a sin

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offering, but as a life-giving Spirit, to bring all that wait for him into the fullness of redemption (Hebrews 9:28) Yes! He will come again to all that look for him (Philippians 3:20). And these ones will see him visibly as he now is, and shall associate with him eternally, because they also shall be like him (1 John 3:2).

Thus even though the appearing of the Lord in his Second Advent relates to a visible bodily appearance, it is not to be supposed that the bodily appearance would be an appearance in flesh and blood. *There are bodies terrestrial* (of which the human body is one), *but there are also bodies celestial. But the glory of the celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is a natural body, but there is also a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam (the Lord Jesus Christ) was made a quickening Spirit. The first man is of the earth earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven* (1 Corinthians 15:35-50).

It is this coming of the Lord in a bodily visible form, to be seen and associated with by those who have exercised a deep yearning for his appearing (2 Timothy 4:8) that will bring to completion, all of the comings of the Lord. When this has been fulfilled, the glorified church then becomes the instrumental agency through which God blesses the rest of humanity.

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A GOD OF PURPOSE

In the last section we saw that the Lord is the *Coming One*, and he comes and keeps coming until redemption is fully accomplished. Our God is a God of purpose. He also does all things according to the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11). God has a specific purpose to accomplish in each period in the redemptive calendar and He releases all the resources that are required to accomplish this.

Thus, there is nothing spurious in all of the Lord's activities. When he begins a thing, he also brings it to completion. He comes as the former rain, but he also comes as the latter rain to complete His work. He never, never, abandons the Father's purpose midstream, He is the Faithful and True witness (Revelation 1:5), the *Author*, and also the *Finisher*, of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Ephesians 5:25-27, among other scriptures offer us a great insight into the program of God for the church and for the church age. It says

Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such

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thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

We have already seen that it is in the time of his appearing a second time that the Lord will take the church unto himself. That is when we shall associate with him in all of his glory. But that glorification with the Lord cannot come until verse 27 of Ephesians 5 is fulfilled.

Thus, the fulfilment in the church of the divine objective revealed in this passage is the only sure indication that the time of the Lord's appearing is now. Until then, the blessed hope of uniting with him in his glory remains a future expectation. May the Lord enable us to realize the import of this and flow with the divine will.

Ephesians 5:27 shows that Christ will cleanse his church of all moral blemish, all doctrinal errors and false emphasis in ministry and spiritual conduct. These are the things that constitute the spots and the wrinkles. He will thoroughly purge his floor by carrying out those activities that will enable the church to come to perfection in these two aspects, made holy and without blemish (Mathew 3:12).

That reminds us of the Lord's word in Luke 17:20-21. It says

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God should come, he

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answered them and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

Neither shall they say, Lo here! Or there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.

The second coming of the Lord is not something that shall happen outside of your involvement as a believer. It does not come with observation. If you are to partake of the blessings thereof, there are things you must do. The rule of the King must first of all be established within you before the Kingdom can come outwardly. So, you cannot be part of what God is doing, if you want to remain in a state of moral weakness and spiritual dullness.

The implication of all these is that there is a lot of cleansing work the Lord will carry out in the midst of the church before the time of the Lord's second appearing. Put differently, when the time of the Lord's appearing is near, there will be a lot of activities that will be taking place in the church of Jesus Christ.

A passage of scriptures that brings this to light very clearly is Malachi 3. We read verses 1-3

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight

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in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness

This passage, which had some level of fulfilment at the time of the Lord's first advent, speaks of the things that are to be fulfilled in their full measure at the time of his second advent.

We are told the Lord shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant. The coming of the Lord to his temple here mentioned is not the coming of the Lord in his bodily, visible form, but his coming as rain. "*Rain*" in spiritual symbolism where the context so admits, refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Word on the waiting church designed to lift her up in life and service.

This must be so because we are told he would be as refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. Thus his coming would be revealed in certain cleansing activities he would be fulfilling in his church.

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He sits as a refiner to purify the silver of truth. This relates to doctrines, our belief structure and the things that flow there-from. Then as fullers' soap, he purifies our moral lives. The fullers' soap is a bleaching agency that is applied in the washing of heavily stained dirty garments.

Our garments of moral character and characteristics and of ministerial conduct are to be thoroughly washed of spots and blemishes. And if the garment be torn because of the excessive washing, He will grant unto us change of raiments if we submit to him (Zechariah 3:4).

Yes! He shall purify the sons of Levi (a type of all believers, constituted by God to be a kingdom of priests unto Him: Revelation 5:10; 1Peter 2:9). And the purpose of all these is that they might offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

THREE PHASES IN THE LORD'S SECOND

ADVENT

From the above considerations, it is clear that the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be a one-day event, because there will be so much work the Lord will be carrying out in the church in preparing her for his appearing.

Indeed the Lord's Second Advent (and his activities during that time) is to span a number of years which,

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though the scriptures do not specify, is likened to a generation (Mathew 24: 30-34).

Also, Mathew 24:37; Luke 17:26 says the coming of the Lord in his second advent shall be *as* in the days of Noah. *But as the days of Noah were so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

The phrase the “*days of Noah*” does not refer to the entire days of Noah’s life, but to the time period in which God began to deal with him specifically in relation to the events that were to bring an end to the world that then was.

However, there are three distinct phases or periods in the general time period called “*the days of Noah*”. There was **the period before the flood**, then we had **the period of the flood**, and then came **the period after the flood**. Each of these three periods had its characteristics and parallels a distinct phase or time period in the Lord’s Second Advent.

So, we need to look closely at “*the days of Noah*” in order to be able to understand the activities associated with the Lord’s Second Advent. For *as the days of Noah were so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

The aspect of “*the days of Noah*” described as **the days before the flood** spanned 120 years during which Noah fulfilled a particular ministry in relation

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to the flood. Genesis 6 describes the setting which made the flood of divine judgment inevitable.

We are told that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, especially after that the sons of God fell from their holy estates and mingled with the daughters of men (a fitting description and type of the apostasy that results when the church, the holy seed, mingles with the world). *And it repented God that he had made man upon the earth and it grieved him at his heart* (Genesis 6:6). Thus, God purposed to destroy that world.

In the midst of the general apostasy, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was thus commissioned by God to fulfil a ministry in relation to the coming judgment. He was to warn the people by preaching the word of righteousness and of the coming judgment and by showing forth an example in his own life of what the Lord required of them. The Bible says Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5).

Again he was to build an ark, which was to be the means of his own deliverance, and of all that submit themselves to the testimony he bore, from the coming judgment. By these activities, Noah became the instrument of God for the judgment and overthrow of that world (Hebrews 11:7).

It is pertinent to note that God delayed divine judgment, giving enough time for the ark to be built

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and for Noah and all those who hearkened to him to enter into the ark, before the flood came. We are told, *and the Lord shut them in* (Genesis 7: 16b). All of these events took about a hundred and twenty years as prophesied in Genesis 6:3. And then the flood came.

In a similar way, **the period of the flood** goes beyond a day's activity. According to the words of Genesis 7:12, the waters of the flood was upon the earth forty days and forty nights and it took a hundred and fifty days for the waters to be fully abated (Genesis 7:24; 8:3).

Then we have the **days after the flood**. This period is characterized by a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. God enters into a new covenant with mankind and gives to man a new dominion, higher than that which man originally lost in Eden (Genesis 8:18-9:2).

As mentioned early on, these three time periods in "*the days of Noah*" and the events characteristic of each, are typical of the different phases of the general time period called the Lord's Second Advent and the activities the Lord will be carrying out in the earth in each of these phases.

In other words, there are three phases or time periods in the Lord's Second Advent. And in order to differentiate between these phases, the New

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Testament Scriptures employ four different Greek words to describe the Lord's Second Coming.

The first of these words is *Parousia*. Specific references are Mathew 24:3, 37. The word *Parousia* means “*presence*”, even though it is commonly translated “coming” in the KJV of the Bible. It is also used to denote the Lord's coming in a general sense.

However, because the other Greek words that describe the Lord's Second Coming focus on the last two phases of the Second Advent, the word *Parousia* can be thought of as describing the first phase of the Lord's Second Advent. Thus, we can talk about the time of the *Parousia*, the time of the great outpouring of truth upon His waiting church as previously pointed out.

In the first phase of the Lord's Second Advent, which parallels **the days before the flood**, the Lord comes to the Church as the Messenger of the covenant, not in his bodily, visible form, but as the latter rain.

He introduces us to a season of great unveiling of the power of his word and of the workings of his Spirit at a scale beyond that which is generally known. At that time, the things of our redemption and of the plans and purposes of God contained in the scriptures, but which were as sealed hitherto, are to be fully revealed. This is to be accompanied by a

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great work of cleansing and purification among the faithful.

Daniel 12: 8-10 confirms this. Also Revelation 10: 1-7 shows that at the time of the Lord's Second Advent, *the mystery of God* (all that God has planned and purpose in Christ for the church: Ephesians 3:3, 4; 5:32; 6:19; Colossians 1:26, 27) *would be finished*. That is, the mystery of God would not only be fully revealed, but would also be fully accomplished.

We are also shown that when that season sets in, there would be so much to be done in the church and God will not exercise any delay. *There will be time no longer*. He will do a quick work and cut it short in righteousness (Romans 9:28).

Thus, the *Parousia* (the coming of the Lord in the first phase of his Second Advent) has nothing much to do with the world. In this time period the attention of the Lord is almost exclusively towards the church. The world and the worldly are totally ignorant of His dealings with His people. However, the outcome of Christ's activities in this period has implications for the world.

Following the *Parousia* of Christ is the *time of his appearing*, the time of *the revelation of the son of man* (Luke 17:30). This time period has relevance to both the church and the world as revealed in the two

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Greek words used to denote the Lord's coming in this phase.

The first of the two Greek words describing the time of the appearing is *Epiphaneia*. The word appears in 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; and Titus 2:13.

The word means “*a manifestation, appearing, brightness*”. It derives from a root word which mean “*conspicuous, memorable, notable, to shine, to give light*”. 1 Timothy 6:14-15 says that the appearing is **to show** to all that the Lord Jesus is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of lords. 2 Timothy 4:1 also reveal that the *epiphaneia* is associated with judgment.

Thus, the word carries with it the idea of a coming fearful judgment upon the unrighteous. In other words, the Lord's appearing is to be to the unbelieving world and to the unfaithful among the Lord's people as the flood of tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:3; 2 Peter 3:10; Mathew 24:43).

The second Greek word that is used to denote the second phase of the Lord's Second Coming is *Apocalypses*. Specific references are Luke 17:30; 1 Peter 1:7, 13 and Revelation 1:1.

The word means “*a disclosure*”, “*a revelation*”, “*a manifestation*”. It connotes the idea of “*taking off the cover from something that has been hidden*”. Thus, in the appearing, there is an unveiling of the Son of man

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in his glory, there is an unveiling of the outcome of the **secret** activities of the Lord in the *Parousia*. At that time, there shall be the manifestation (apocalypses) of the Sons of God.

The third phase of the Lord's Second Advent is when He comes in his glory with the glorified saints to establish his rule over mankind and his kingdom all over the earth. Mathew 25:31 says, *And when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.*

The Greek word used to describe this phase of the Lord's Second Advent is *Basileia*, which means "rule", "a realm", "kingdom". That Kingdom reign shall last a thousand years, at the end of which there would have been realized a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 20:4; 21:1).

Our focus in the remaining part of this meditation will be to take a closer look at the things that constitute the activities of the Lord at the time of his *Parousia* and see what implications these have for us as believers.

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LORD AT THE TIME OF HIS PAROUSIA

The *Parousia* is set apart by God to prepare the church for the unveiling of the fullness of the glory of

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His Son, Jesus Christ. Without the *Parousia*, there cannot be an *epiphaneia* or an *apocalypses*. 1Peter 4:17 says *judgment must begin in the house of God*. God's judgment of the world will await His producing a redeemed people, perfected in His image and likeness. God could not judge the world that then was until such a phrase was fulfilled ...*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord* (Genesis 6:8).

So the *Parousia* occupies a crucial place in the Father's plan and purposes. Until the purpose of God in it is fully realized, the church age will neither be brought to a close nor the tribulation and Kingdom introduced.

What then are the specific activities that the Lord carries out in the midst of the church during the *Parousia*?

First, He inspects his house and reckons with his servants. Those who are found measurably faithful among his servants are given a new commission, which enables them to share with him (in an increasingly manner) in his ministry towards the church. The following scriptures are referenced in this connection: Luke 19:11-27; Mathew 25:14-30; 24:42-50.

Whatever knowledge of him or grace to serve we might possess as servants of God is only a fractional expression of that knowledge of His will and grace that is fully available in Christ. It is only an in-part

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expression (1 Corinthians 13:9) of his fullness. There is an enlarged capacity to know him and enlarged grace to serve in the outworking of his purpose on earth that the Lord seeks to give his servants at the time of the *Parousia*.

But the wisdom and understanding of his will, plans and purposes, and increasing grace to share in his work of perfecting the church and preparing her for full union with him, are to be given only to those who are found to have been faithful. These ones will evidence having hearts that easily yield to his rule.

It is important to note that when the Lord comes to examine his servants, there is none that is found absolutely faithful. However, there are some that are found measurably faithful and have hearts loyal to the Lord. To these ones, the Lord increasingly commits more of his goods (Mathew 24:47), making them ruler over many things (Mathew 25:23).

What are the goods of the Lord? They are the riches of his Word and of his Spirit. They are the things by which a man serves God acceptably.

He says in Revelation 3:18 *I counseled thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

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These true riches are to be given only to the measurably faithful. By them they are able to have insight into the plans God for the church today and to share in the ministry of Christ towards her.

While the Lord gives to the measurably faithful and loyal at heart more of his goods, he cast the unfaithful into outer darkness (a place of increasing loss of relevance in the outworking of God's purposes in the earth).

There are many things that go with being cast into outer darkness: the darkening of the eyes and the binding of the hands and feet (Mathew 22:13; Psalm 69:23), the gradual slaying or cutting asunder of such servant before the son of man, appointing him a portion with the hypocrites (Mathew 24:51). These are processes of divine judgment which are all preparatory towards a final judgment at the time of the great tribulation, and beyond.

To the ones among God's people that are cast into outer darkness, the Lord's coming in his second phase can only be as "*a thief in the night*" Mathew 24:43). Like the unbeliever, they are more or less ignorant of the activities of the Lord in his *Parousia*, totally oblivious of that which the Master doeth (John 15:15). Rather than being on the Lord's side, such are even found opposing his will.

Daniel 12:10 says *the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise*

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shall understand. May the Lord's mercy be embraced now.

The outer darkness may not appear to be a place of judgment initially, but ultimately, *there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth* in that overthrow (Mathew 24:51).

Mathew 24:31 summarizes the new commission that the Lord gives those of his servants that are measurably faithful at the time of the *Parousia*. It says *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another*. A great sound of a trumpet to gather the elect! This relate to the work of reaping. These angels are also called the "*Reapers*" in Mathew 13:30.

The essential nature of the commission received is to separate between the tares and the wheat, to gather the wheat among God's people (those who are faithful to him and have a true heart, yielding to his rule, the elect) together into the Lord's barn for a further work, while binding the tares (the habitually unfaithful and disloyal at heart) together in preparation for judgment.

Of course, the wheat and tares are first of all symbolic of doctrines, moral conditions and spiritual practices. While the wheat refer to such doctrines, ministerial emphases, moral and spiritual conducts

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that agree with the doctrines of Christ (Hebrews 6:1-2), the tares symbolize erroneous and ruinous doctrines and teachings, and such moral and spiritual conducts that are not harmonious with the cause of Christ (Mathew 13: 19, 41).

However, both the wheat and the tares are also persons that are formed by these things. (Mathew 13:38). So these reaping angels have a commission, which is to separate between truth and error in doctrine and practices, and to gather unto the Lord those among his people that manifest true yieldedness to him.

The second thing the Lord does in the time of his *parousia* is that he cleanses all of his people that he has gathered unto himself through the sound of the trumpet (Mathew 24:31). Remember Ephesians 5: 25-27.

We all come with moral conditions that fall short of divine expectation and with received doctrines and practices that are at best a mixture of truth and error. So the Lord must cleanse his sanctuary, even those whom he has gathered unto himself.

This is a major feature of the activities that takes place in the Lord's barn. In the natural setting, after the farmer has gathered in the wheat, they must be sifted to remove the chaff and other unwanted elements. So also is it in the spiritual fulfilment. Malachi 3:1- 3 which we read earlier bears this out.

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Associated with the above is the release of abundance of rain in the midst of the ones gathered unto the Lord. The Lord does not only cleanse them of doctrinal and moral failures, removing the negative, He also imparts unto them the positive.

He comes to them in the outpouring of the Spirit of the Word and the Word of the Spirit, thereby accomplishing great transformations in their lives. He makes them to understand his plans and purposes for their day. He also builds in them the capacity to reveal him in his moral excellence.

Next, He tests them individually and collectively. The testing would vary from individual to individual, and from congregation to congregation. But the purpose of the Lord in all of them is to further promote the faithful by correcting areas of weaknesses in them.

He also uses the testing to awaken the ones that are not making adequate progress and to remove from the midst of the gathering such as have become habitually unfaithful.

Thus, the fact that a people are gathered to the Lord by the voice of the trumpet at the time of his *Parousia*, does not free them from further inspection and testing. In fact, the four things we have mentioned above are things the Lord does again and again, such that the faithful receives more and more of him, while the habitually unfaithful has even that

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which he already possessed taken away from him. But after each time of testing there is an increase in the unveiling of Christ to His people.

This is the force of Luke 12:32-40; Mathew 25:14-30 and Mathew 24:42-50. Mathew 24:42; Luke 12:37-38, says *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come ...Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: Verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.*

Continuous awakening, yieldedness to the Lord, faithfulness, constancy in the spirit, a continuous enlightenment in the word of his appearing, are all required on the part of each of the gathered ones. Only with these things can we profit from the *Parousia* of Christ and enter into the glory of the *epiphaneia*. *Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days* (Daniel 12:12).

But we are shown that there would be some among the gathered ones who were initially found faithful and given the commission to share in the ministry of Christ to the church but who later become unfaithful. There will also be others who will, in fact, return back to the old order of things from which they were earlier delivered (Mathew 24:48-51; Luke 12: 45-48).

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May the mercies and grace of the Lord keep us perpetually in an awakened condition in relation to the activities of the Lord in his *Parousia*.

As the Lord continues in the five-stage cycle of activities, in the process of time, there will emerge all over the earth, a spiritual body, a prophetic body of people that are morally and spiritually stable. Being adequately enlightened with the revelation of God's plan, they will go forth with the message of the kingdom.

During this period, there are some things the scriptures indicate will also become true in the church world.

Malachi 3:5 says *And I (the Lord) will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.*

This reveals the Lord in swift judgment against the wicked in the assemblies of the Lord's people. Malachi 4:1 says, *Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of host, that it shall leave them neither root nor branches.*

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This revelation of the Lord in works of cleansing and fierce judgment on wickedness and removal of the evil, is what would eventually bring the church to perfection in moral life and spiritual conduct (Mathew 13:41-43). *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*

The perfecting of the faithful through these sanctifying activities of the Lord and his arising upon them as the Sun of righteousness with healings in his wings (Malachi 4:2) are what will lead to the event that the scriptures call *the Manifestation of the Sons of God* (Romans 8:19).

There would be an unveiling of the fullness of power and glory that is in Christ in a body of people that God manifests to the world as his full grown Sons. These ones shall go forth across the face of the earth with the gospel of the kingdom with such power and glory as have never been revealed in the earth before.

They shall also be clothed with the incorruptible life, the Lord having thoroughly transformed their vile bodies (Philippians 3:20, 21; Hebrews 9:28). Yes! This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached with unlimited power and great glory. With mighty signs and wonders and fiery judgments, these Sons of God will witness to the nations. Then shall the end come (Mathew 24:14).

The final thing the Lord does towards the faithful in his Second Advent, haven manifested them to the

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world as his brethren (Hebrews 2:10-13), is to glorify them. This relates to their taking on the fullness of the divine life, becoming immortal spirit beings. That will open the way for the *Basileia*, the kingdom age in which CHRIST, Head and body will rule and reign over the nations.

Yes! The *present heaven*, the present spiritual government over the earth, the present *power (kingdom) of the air* (Ephesians 2: 2) shall be utterly destroyed. And in its place shall be installed a new spiritual government over the earth and over mankind: the government of the glorified Christ, head and body. “*Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end*” (Isaiah 9:7).

May you have a part in that heavenly kingdom. May the coming of the Lord bring glory and not destruction unto you. May you not have your part in the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. May you be gathered to the presence of the Lord in the revelation of His word and the outworking's of His Spirit at this time of the end. May you be delivered from the outercourt of mere religion into the mainstream of the Lord's activities in his *Parousia*. May the Lord bless you and cause his face to shine upon you. Amen!