
PAROUSIA FULFILLED – TIME STATEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION:

'As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the **sign of your coming** and of the **end of the age**?"' (Matt 24:3)

The theme of eschatology is the Second Coming of Christ. The original Greek term is 'Parousia' (Gk: 'παρουσία'), which means: "coming" or "presence" or "arrival" or "advent".

There are many TIME STATEMENTS in the New Testament about the imminence of the Parousia.

GOSPELS: WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT THE TIME OF THE PAROUSIA

Matthew 10 - Jesus sent out his twelve Apostles telling them to go "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (v.6), proclaiming "the kingdom of God is **at hand**" (v.7). He warned them about possible persecution saying: "When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, **you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.**" (Matt 10:23)

Matthew 16 - "For the Son of Man is going to [Gk: mello: **about to**] come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Truly, I say to you, **there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.**" (Matt 16:27-28) (see also: Mark 8:38-9:1 & Luke 9:26-27)

Matthew 23 - Jesus decreed seven woes on the scribes and Pharisees for their corruption, greed, hypocrisy and murder of his messengers. And then He prophesied their fate: "so that **on you** may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, **all these things will come upon this generation.**" (Matt 23:35-36) (see also: Mark 13 & Luke 21)

Matthew 24 - Jesus prophesied that the temple was about to be completely destroyed: "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." (Matt 24:2)

Sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, the disciples asked to know more:

"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the **sign of your coming** [Gk:parousia] and of the **end** [Gk:synteleia] **of the age** [Gk:aion]?" (Matt 24:3)

Jesus described the events of his Parousia: false messiahs and false prophets, wars and rumours of wars, famines, earthquakes, great persecution and murder of Christians, apostasy and lawlessness (Matt 24:4-32).

Jesus warned his disciples to flee to the mountains when they see the signs of the approaching Parousia: "Then let those who are in Judea **flee to the mountains.**" (Matt 24:16)

And again Jesus reiterates the imminence of these End Times events: "Truly, I say to you, **this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.**" (Matt 24:34) (also Mark 13:30 & Luke 21:32)

John 21 - After his resurrection, Jesus met the disciples by the sea of Galilee (called Tiberias in John 21). Peter asked Him about John's future: "Lord, what about this man?" Jesus replied: "**If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!**" (John 21:22)

REVELATION: WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT THE TIME OF THE PAROUSIA

The book of Revelation also reinforces the expectation of an imminent Parousia in the first century.

Speaking to the seven 1st century churches in Asia Minor, Jesus says the Parousia will be soon... the time is near: "*The revelation [Gk:apokalypse] of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants **the things that must soon take place** [Gk:tachei].*" (Rev 1:1)

"... for **the time is near.**" (Rev 1:3)

Jesus repeats that promise in the closing chapter of the Revelation: "And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants **what must soon take place** [Gk:tachei]."" (Rev 22:6)

Here are more examples from Revelation:

"Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, **even those who pierced him.**" (Rev 1:7)

"Therefore repent. If not, **I will come to you soon** [Gk:tachy] and war against them with the sword of my mouth." (Rev 2:16)

"The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is **soon to come** [Gk:tachy]." (Rev 11:14)

"And behold, **I am coming soon** [Gk:tachy]. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." (Rev 22:7)

"Behold, **I am coming soon** [Gk:tachy], bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done." (Rev 22:12)

"He who testifies to these things says, "**Surely I am coming soon** [Gk:tachy]."" (Rev 22:20)

Note that seven of these verses use the Greek word: tachy or tachei, which means "quickly", "quickness" or "speed". Clearly, the book of Revelation prophesies a "**soon**" Parousia coming "**quickly**", during the lifetime of the disciples to whom the book was originally written.

ACTS & EPISTLES: WHAT THE APOSTLES SAID ABOUT TIME OF THE PAROUSIA

The Apostles of Jesus Christ also spoke and wrote about the imminence of the coming Parousia. They announced that they were in the Last Days, the End of the Ages and that the Lord was at hand.

A. LAST DAYS

The Apostles repeatedly stated that they were living in the Last Days (or Last Hour):

Book of Acts - On the Day of Pentecost, nearly 2000 years ago, a multitude of people in Jerusalem witnessed the Apostles speaking in various foreign languages. Peter explained that this phenomenon was the **fulfillment of Joel's prophecy about the Last Days**: "*And in the **last days** it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;*" (Acts 2:17)

Epistle to the Hebrews - The writer of Hebrews also talked about the **Last Days**: *“but in **these last days** he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”* (Heb 1:2)

Epistle of James - James warned the rich Jews about their greed, fraud and murder in the **Last Days**: *“Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. **You have laid up treasure in the last days.**”* (James 5:3)

First Epistle of Peter - Peter wrote that Jesus was manifested in the **last times**: *“He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but **was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.**”* (1 Pet 1:20)

First Epistle of John - As the date of the Parousia was looming closer and closer, John actually wrote that **it was in fact the Last Hour** and already there were many antichrists (as prophesied): *“Children, **it is the last hour**, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, **so now many antichrists have come.** Therefore we know that **it is the last hour.**”* (1 John 2:18)

B. END OF THE AGE

In their epistles, the Apostles revealed that the **End of the Ages** had come upon them:

First Epistle to the Corinthians - *“Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, **on whom the end of the ages** [Gk:aion] **has come.**”* (1 Cor 10:11)

Epistle to the Hebrews - *“But as it is, **he has appeared once for all at the end** [Gk:synteleia] **of the ages** [Gk:aion] to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”* (from Heb 9:26)

C. SOME WOULD STILL BE ALIVE

The Apostles revealed that some early Christians would still be alive at the Parousia:

First Epistle to the Corinthians - *“Behold! I tell you a mystery. **We shall not all sleep**, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and **we shall be changed.**”* (1 Cor 15:51-52)

First Epistle to the Thessalonians - *“Then **we who are alive, who are left**, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so **we will always be with the Lord.**”* (1 Thess 4:17)

Second Epistle to the Thessalonians - Paul recognised the steadfastness and faith of the Christians at Thessalonika, despite them suffering persecutions and afflictions. He encouraged those 1st century Christians with the news that God would soon relieve them and punish their tormentors at the Parousia: *“since indeed God considers it just **to repay with affliction those who afflict you**, and **to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us**, when the Lord Jesus is revealed [Gk:apokalypse] from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”* (2 Thess 1:6-8)

D. THE LORD IS AT HAND

The Apostles encouraged their contemporaries, saying that the “the Lord is at hand” (in the 1st century):

Epistle to the Philippians - *“Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. **The Lord is at hand;**”* (Phil 4:5)

Epistle of James - *“You also, **be patient.** Establish your hearts, for the coming of **the Lord is at hand.** ... behold, the Judge is standing at the door.”* (from James 5:8-9)

E. A LITTLE WHILE...NO DELAY...IT IS TIME

The Apostles revealed that the Parousia was very imminent... no delay... it was time:

Epistle to the Hebrews - *“For, **Yet a little while**, and the coming one will come and **will not delay;**”* (Heb 10:37)

First Epistle of Peter - *“The end of all things **is at hand;** therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.”* (1 Pet 4:7)

*“For **it is time for judgement to begin** at the household of God; and **if it begins with us**, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Pet 4:17)*

CONCLUSION:

The primary audience of the New Testament writings was 1st century Christians: contemporaries of Jesus and his Apostles. These early Christians were comforted and encouraged by the imminence passages and TIME STATEMENTS in the NT. With more than 100 such passages, it is clear that 1st century Christians rightfully expected that relief from their suffering was coming soon, during that generation, at the Parousia of Christ.

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