

HE'S COMING!

By Ron Wilson

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1. PAROUSIA — "BEING PRESENT"

A. HISTORICAL AND ETYMOLOGICAL MEANING OF PAROUSIA

Parousia literally means "being with or beside" and had the original meaning of a presence or visit, with the emphasis not on the action of coming or the arrival but on the **presence of the person for an interval of time**. It evolved to stress in some cases the actual arrival, but the concept of "staying" or visiting for a time was never lost. Thus the English word "coming" as is found in the KJV and the NIV is not an exact translation because "coming" does not necessarily indicate the fact of staying and visiting and puts the emphasis the action of coming -- to the loss of the vital idea that Christ is to be present with us.

In secular Greek, *parousia* was often used on the occasion of an official royal visit, such as when the Roman emperor made a *parousia* in the provinces in the east. The roads were repaired; crowds flocked to do homage; there were processions, trumpet blasts, acclamations, speeches, petitions, gifts, and festivities. Often a new era was reckoned from the *parousia* of the king or emperor, and coins were struck to commemorate it. Note that the king was not only passing through; he would stay for a period of time to establish his authority of the region and set in place authority and policies for after his departure. Similarly, the arrival of Christ in Kingdom power would certainly be the arrival or the visit of a King.

It seems that the concept of Christ's "coming" prevalent in the time of King James I influenced the translators of the KJV to use the word "coming" for *parousia*. Scriptures below show that they used the word "presence" to translate *parousia* when "coming" made no sense. My argument is that they should have consistently used "presence" or "visit" rather than "coming".

B. USES OF THE WORD PAROUSIA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Christ's *parousia* at His transfiguration

When Peter in his epistle (2 Pet. 1:16) refers to the transfiguration, he uses the word *parousia* for the manifestation of the glorious presence of Christ that happened at that time--usually translated as "coming". However, note that this *parousia* lasted for a period of time, with no reference to a special "coming" to the mount. Christ was already there bodily and remained after, but the *parousia* was a bursting out for a time of a glorious presence that was not normally seen.

2. Paul's bodily *parousia*

In 2 Corinthians, (10:10), Paul reports that some people were saying that "his letters...are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence (*parousia*) is weak..." Here it is obvious that *parousia* here has nothing to do with the manner of Paul's traveling, but with his physical body being there for a time.

In Philippians, Paul contrasts his *parousia*--his bodily "presence"--with his physical absence: "...ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence (*parousia*) only, but now much more in my absence." Paul's "coming" obviously was essential to his being there, but his physical presence for a time was his *parousia*.

3. The *parousia* of Paul and others in the NT

Note that, in the following verses, using the translation "coming" does not cause a problem because a visit is obviously shown by the context. However, notice that the word "visit" inserted in the following texts shows more clearly the intended meaning:

I am glad of the visit ("coming" *parousia*) of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus . . . (1Cor. 16:17)

Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the visit ("coming" *parousia*) of Titus; (2 Co 7:6)

That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my visit ("coming" *parousia*) to you again. (Phil. 1:26)

4. The Lord's *parousia* likened to periods of rain

When James talks about the *parousia* of the Lord, he pictures a farmer waiting for the "former and latter rain" in order to reap the "fruit of the earth". He is referring to the prophecy in Hosea 6:3: "...he shall come unto us as the rain, as the former and latter rain to the earth." Again, these rains lasted for a period of time and refer to a period of blessing by the Holy Spirit. Have we already experienced some of this "rain" in revivals such as the Welsh revival? Could such times have been examples of the *parousia* of Christ?

5. The Lord's *parousia* likened to the time of Noah's flood (Matt. 24:37-41)

As the flood "took all away" unexpectedly, so also when the Lord will be present, the ungodly will be taken away to judgment unexpectedly. Note this is a time of taking away the ungodly, not a secret rapture of the Church. In a similar passage in Luke, the term "days of the Son of Man" shows evidence that *parousia* refers to a period of time--"days", not "day". There will be a period of time in which the ones in the field or at the mill will be taken away in judgment, but for each it will be totally unexpected. Note that it is not the righteous who are taken away.

6. The Lord's *parousia* likened to the rising of the sun (Mat. 24:27)

For as the [~~lightning~~] bright shining [of the sun] cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming (*parousia*) of the Son of man be.

In this verse, the word "lightning" is obviously a misleading translation of the Greek word *astrape*. This word is a general word for "bright shining" and only means "lightning" when it is coupled with the word for "thunder". Note its use in Luke 11:36: "If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the **bright shining** (*astrape*) of a candle doth give thee light." The word *astrape* is also used to describe the countenance of an angel at the empty tomb. (Matt. 28:3) A bright, shining glory in his face would certainly be the meaning, rather than bolts of lightning emanating from his face.

It seems that the rising of the sun is referred to emphasize that **all** will see the brightness of the presence (*parousia*) of the Lord, just as the rising sun can be seen all the way to the western horizon. The previous verse supports this interpretation as we are told not to believe those who invite us to find Christ "in the desert" or "in the inner rooms". Verse 30 of the same chapter

emphasizes the public viewing of Christ by "all the nations of the earth"....they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory."

7. Meeting the Lord in the Air

We can legitimately insert the word "presence" or "visit" for the word *parousia* in following scripture; note how the verse conveys a different meaning than many Christians have assumed.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the [visit and period of the] presence ("coming" *parousia*) of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. (1Th 4:15)

In all other scriptures, *parousia* refers to a visit on the earth; thus, it seems the word *parousia* indicates the Lord shall be coming for a time of visiting with us here on earth and that we are to be "caught up" as we "go out to meet Him" and show our welcome for our King to begin His *parousia* on earth.

C. CHRIST'S PAROUSIA IN AND THROUGH HIS BODY

In the wording of the New Testament, the Lord's *parousia* seems to refer to a future visit by Jesus in a physical body. I believe that we should consider that at least this is being partially, at least, fulfilled in and through His "body", the church. Although it seems that it has been His plan not to reveal this mystery clearly up until now, perhaps Paul had this in mind when He said in 2 Thess. 1:10: "When he shall come **to be glorified in his saints**, and to be admired in all them that believe. . . ." In a literal translation of 1 Thess. 3:13, Paul is praying that the Thessalonians might be strengthened in being blameless and holy in the presence of God the Father **in or during** the visiting presence of Jesus.

Further, could His *parousia* be the occasion of the "manifestation of the sons of God"?

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be **also glorified together**. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory which shall be revealed in us**. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for **the manifestation of the sons of God**. (Rom. 8:17-19)

It can be shown that this *parousia* necessarily does not have to be only in the future. As 1 Thess. 3:13 seems to state, has it already started to some measure? How real can Christ's presence be appreciated and experienced here and now in increasing ways? Notice the following scriptures and see that they could refer to a spiritual *parousia*.

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, **there am I in the midst** of them (Matt 18:20)

I am with you alway even unto the end of the world. (Matt. 28:20)

Now **ye are the body of Christ**, and members in particular. (1 Cor. 12:27)

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**: (Gal. 2:20)

. . . **Christ in you**, the hope of glory: (Col 1:27)

. . . for he hath said, **I will never leave thee**, nor forsake thee (Heb 13:5)

Draw nigh to God and **He will draw nigh to you**. (Jam. 4:8)

D. SUMMARY OF CIRCUMSTANCES AT CHRIST'S *PAROUSIA*

As we look at all the events that seem associated with a *parousia* of Christ, they do not indicate a one short visit, but various periods of time, past, present, or future.

1. A period of unexpected judgments:

Matt. 24:3 destruction of the temple, Jerusalem, wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution, deception, abomination in the "holy place"

Matt. 24:27-31 falling of sun, stars, mourning of nations, gathering of elect

Matt. 24:39 unexpected taking away of individuals to judgment

2 Thess 2:8 destruction of the wicked by His brightness

2. Glory, reign of Christ, resurrection, rejoicing

1 Thess 2:19 rejoicing in other saints

1 Thess 4:15 resurrection with saints who "sleep"

1 Cor. 15:23 resurrection of saints, reign of Christ

3. Spiritual work done by/during Christ's *parousia*

1 Thess. 3:13 strengthening in holiness "in" Christ's *parousia*

1 Thess 5:23 spirit, soul, and body, preserved blameless "in" His *parousia*

Jas 5:7 Refreshing rain to produce fruit by periods of His *parousia*

E. CRUCIFORMITY AND CHRIST'S *PAROUSIA*

It seems evident that the physical presence of Jesus after His resurrection clearly showed the scars of His crucifixion. Revelation shows Him in glory now and in the future as the "Lamb having been slain". Thus, we can expect that any physical *parousia* of Jesus will be marked by signs of His crucifixion. In like manner, any spiritual *parousia* of Christ in and through His body, the Church, will be marked by expressions of cruciformity. For a thorough treatment of cruciformity, see these pages at my website www.becruciform.com: "Cruciformity --Thesis", "Conformed to His Death=LIFE!", and "Essays".

For us to experience any physical or spiritual *parousia* of Christ, it may be very important that we know clearly how to recognize Him. We might miss Him by not looking for cruciformity in His appearance and nature. As we seek to know Him now and be "conformed to His death", we are better able to "see Him" since we are becoming "like Him":

The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are the children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But **we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.** (1 John 3:1-2)

2. APOKALUPSIS — "UN-COVERING"

The Greek noun *apokalupsis* comes from the verb *apokalupto*, which means to take the cover off, unveil, or reveal. Its meaning can be seen clearly in this statement in Matt. 10:26: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed (*apokalupto* 'un-covered')." When applied to the uncovering of Christ, it means obviously Christ must not be far away, but present in a some hidden way; and then that which hides Him is removed so that He is no longer hidden. There is no physical "coming" necessarily implied in the meaning of this word, but an uncovering of His hidden presence. If a physical coming is involved, then it would be His coming from one dimension or sphere into another, from the spiritual into the physical.

These words are used often in the New Testament to apply to the uncovering of hidden truths and translated usually by "revelation" or a form of the verb "reveal". Obviously, their uncovering is a spiritual one, where we "see" truths that are revealed (uncovered) to us by the Holy Spirit.

In this study, we are focusing on the hidden state of Christ -- on how He is covered and how and when He is un-covered.

It seems clear in some instances that *apokalupto* involved a physical "seeing" in the minds of the writers:

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed (*apokalupto* un-covered) from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (2 Thes. 1:6)

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing (*apokalupsis* un-covering) of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy...(1 Pet. 1:7)

In such cases as above, that which covers Jesus is His being present in a spiritual state and not present in a physical form that we can see with our physical eyes.

However, in the following verse, the un-covering of Christ within Paul is a spiritual concept, not a physical one. Nonetheless, it was an un-covering that affected dramatically His physical actions:

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal (*apokalupto* un-cover) his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; . . . (Gal. 1:15-16)

Paul predicted a similar un-covering in us:

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed (*apokalupto* un-covered) in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation (*apokalupsis* un-covering) of the sons of God. (Rom. 8:16-17)

The question is, "How much of this un-covering can happen now?" What keeps the glory of the presence of Christ hidden in us individually and corporately? And how much of His presence can be un-covered now? It seems that we must first of all accept the reality of His glorious presence within us and then discover how to allow Him to be un-covered to us and to those around.

We all profess to believe that Jesus lives in each of us and can quote scriptures to prove that fact that somehow by His Spirit He actually is present within us. Further, we know that in some special way, Christ is present in His Body, the Church. How much have these realities been un-covered to us?

In John 12:24-26, Jesus explains that the Life in us is like a seed. If we allow our Life to be hidden in the ground and to go through a death, then later greater Life will be un-covered as the plant bursts forth and produces many seeds. In Chapter 12 of *Conformed to His Death=LIFE!* (www.becruciform.com), there is extensive teaching on how brokenness in us allows the un-covering and release of Christ's glorious Life hidden within us. We need to pursue "being conformed to His death" and find brokenness in repentance and humility to un-cover to ourselves the glorious cruciform Life that has been planted in us and to then allow this Life to be un-covered and released to all those around.

Peter explains that "inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed (*apokalupto* un-covered) ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Pet. 4:13). As we learn to react to all that can be classified as suffering with the same cruciform attitudes and actions of Jesus, we find that His glory is un-covered in and through us. Why would we conclude that this un-covering must wait entirely for a future day? If this un-covering is the "down-payment" (earnest Eph. 1:14) of our inheritance, then the greater we can experience the down-payment now, the greater we can appreciate what will be the ultimate future glory!

Repentance of all that is not the glory or likeness of Jesus Christ brings brokenness that un-covers His glory in and through us. Perhaps the reason we limit the amount of the un-covering of this glory now is because we avoid repentance. When God un-covers to us the glory within us now, we more eagerly seek brokenness to have this glory un-covered more.

As has been said, there is a special un-covering of the presence and glory of Christ in and through His body. When we together seek to love each other with His glorious cruciform love, let us not limit the amount of this glorious love that can be expressed and experienced in any group of believers who gather together.

We are predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son ..." (Rom. 8:29); we must not let our doctrines hinder that process now in any way!

"Pursue cruciformity!" (Phil. 3:1-14)

3. EPIPHANEIA – "SHINING FORTH"

The Greek noun *epiphaneia* comes from the verb *epiphaino*, which means to shine forth. They are usually translated "appearing" and "to appear"; however, such English words miss an essential aspect of the meaning of *epiphaino* – to shine brightly as the sun or stars. The Greek words have a connotation of glory and majesty, whereas, "appearing" only tells us that something has become visible.

You will remember that *parousia* referred to the presence or a visit of Christ and that *apokalupsis* meant an un-covering. *Epiphaneia* implies the splendour or glory that shines forth after that un-covering.

The following verses show these words used to refer to the life of Jesus on earth and His work on the Cross (note the past passive tense):

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared (*epiphaino* lit. "hath been shone forth") to all men (Tit. 2:11)

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared (*epiphaino* lit. "hath been shone forth") (Tit 3:4)

But is now made manifest by the appearing (*epiphaneia* "shining forth") of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Tim. 1:10)

The next verses indicate a future time for Paul, or possibly a present time for us to see at least a partial fulfilment:

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness (*epiphaneia* "shining forth") of his coming (*parousia* "presence"): (2 Thes. 2:8)

That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing (*epiphaneia* "shining forth") of our Lord Jesus Christ: (1 Tim. 6:14)

I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at (according to) his appearing (*epiphaneia* "shining forth") and his kingdom; (2 Tim. 4:1)

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing (*epiphaneia* "shining forth") of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Tit. 2:13)

The first group of verses show the use of *epiphaneia* to express the glory that shone forth from Christ in His earthly walk and from His work on the Cross. The following excerpt from my thesis on Cruciformity is included below to establish the importance of the glory of the Cross. Consider my conviction that every present or future *epiphaneia* of Christ will manifest the same glory, the glory of the Cross.

Study # 1

The Glories of the Cross and of Cruciformity

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:18)

It is likely that many readers would picture Jesus as the glorified King on His throne in heaven as they read this scripture. This interpretation is valid; however, the Gospel of John clearly refers to Jesus being glorified on the Cross. Three times, John speaks of His being "lifted up" (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32) and thus "spiritually exalted before the eyes of the world".¹

When some Greeks came to see Him, Jesus said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (John 12:23). Soon after that, Jesus prays, "Father, glorify your name!"; then the Father answers, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:28). Just after Judas left the upper room, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once." (John 13:31). Finally, in John 17, Jesus prays: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you." (John 17:1)

No doubt, all readers would agree that it does seem strange to talk about the glories of the Cross, when crucifixion was the most horrible form of torture and the most degrading and shameful method of execution. However, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can see past the horror of the Cross and can agree with John Calvin that the greatest manifestations of His glory in Scripture are shown at the Cross:

For in the cross of Christ, as in a splendid theatre, the incomparable goodness of God is set before the whole world. The glory of God shines, indeed, in all creatures on high and below, but never more brightly than in the cross²

If it be objected that nothing could be less glorious than Christ's death . . . I reply that in that death we see a boundless glory which is concealed from the ungodly.³

Further, note these words from Roy Hession regarding the glory of God shown through the Cross and becoming a cruciform paradigm:

. . . In Him [Jesus] we see not only God but His glory displayed. This gives us a new understanding of that which makes God glorious—and it comes as both a surprise and a shock. For the face that reveals the glory of God is a marred face, spat upon and disfigured by the malice of men . . . But you say,

1 John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1986), 205.

2 Calvin, *St. John*, p. 68, quoted by John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 206.

3 Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 205.

that is not the vision of glory, but of shame and disgrace! However, it is glory as God counts glory . . . not so much in His ability to exalt Himself and humble man, but in His willingness to humble Himself for the sake of man . . .

⁴

Consider Andrew Murray's declaration that the Cross is the chief glory of Christ and thus cruciformity, the most glorious aspect of our conformity to Christ:

We know that the death of the cross is His chief glory. The one mark by which He is separated here in earth and in heaven, from all other persons, both in the Divine Being and in God's universe, is this one: He is the Crucified Son of God. Of all the articles of conformity, this must necessarily be the chief and most glorious one—conformity to His death.⁵

Readers are urged to read again through Table I in Part I (pages 7 to 9) slowly and prayerfully and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the glories of Jesus expressed in the scriptures and to commit themselves ever more deeply to being changed into the same glory.

It is vital we realize that we are not focusing on a wooden Cross nor just on the actual physical suffering of Jesus, but **on the qualities present in our resurrected Lord**, Who today communes with us and wants to reveal His nature to us by having us learn to know Him by our focusing on the glories of His nature that were expressed through His suffering and death, i.e., His cruciformity.

Further, it is imperative that we realize that it is impossible for us to reflect the glories of the Cross by our own effort; we need the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to see these glories and to do the work of changing us into the cruciform glories of Jesus Christ. One important part of reflecting the glory of the Cross is to make sure that we spend much time in meditation on the Cross in a worshipful manner as we commune in prayer with our risen Lord Jesus Christ. These familiar choruses take on new meaning as we consider focusing on the glories of His Cross:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.⁶

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus;
To reach out and touch Him,
And say that we love Him.⁷

⁴ Roy and Revel Hession, *We Would See Jesus* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1958), 20-21.

⁵ Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Secret of Living Like Christ* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1985), 124.

⁶ Helen H. Lemmel, "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus", Copyright Singspiration, 1950.

⁷ Bob Call, "Open our Eyes", Marantha! Music, 1976.

4. PHANEROSIS – "MANIFESTING (HIM)"

The Greek noun *phanerosis* comes from the verb *phaneroo*, which is based on the root verb meaning "to shine", the same root of *epiphaneia*. *Phaneroo* almost always means to manifest openly someone else, whereas *epiphaino* referred to the shining forth of one's self. The KJV translates this verb accurately as "manifesting" or "being manifested" when it is used in past or present time, but uses "appear" illogically when the tense is future.

Examples of Jesus having manifested the nature of the Father during His earthly life:

I have manifested (*phaneroo*) thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; . . . (John 17:6)

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest (*phaneroo*) in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (1 Tim. 3:16)

(For the life was manifested (*phaneroo*), and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested (*phaneroo*) unto us;) (1 John 1:2)

In this was manifested (*phaneroo*) the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (1 John 4:9)

Another example of Jesus manifesting Himself in His resurrection body in the period before His ascension:

After these things Jesus shewed (*phaneroo*) himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed (*phaneroo*) he himself. (John 21:1)

Note these examples of our manifesting **now** the life of Jesus. Could this be a partial fulfillment of how it will be in the future--that Jesus will be manifested perfectly through His body?

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest (*phaneroo*) the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. (2 Cor. 2:14)

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest (*phaneroo*) in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest (*phaneroo*) in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor. 4:10-11)

Note now when the tense is future, the KJV changes to using "appear". There is no logical reason for this switch; "appear" can be for only a moment and it uses *phaneroo* from its implication that something is openly showed for a period of time:

When Christ, who is our life, shall ~~appear~~ (*phaneroo* passive = "be manifested" [by/through us??]) then shall ye also ~~appear~~ (*phaneroo* passive = "be manifested with him in glory. (Col. 3:4)

And when the chief Shepherd shall ~~appear~~ (*phaneroo* passive = "be manifested"), ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (1 Pet. 5:4)

The immediate context of this next verse has nothing to do with a future "coming" of Jesus, but refers to the present behaviour of the Christians whom John is writing to:

And now, little children, abide (or "stay present") in him; that, when (or whenever) he shall ~~appear~~ (*phaneroo* passive = "be manifested"), we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before (or by or from) him at (IN) his ~~coming~~ (*parousia* "presence"). (1 John 2:28)

Consider this possible paraphrase of the preceding verse:

And now, young Christians, stay in His presence, that whenever He is being manifested (by your Christian group) openly in any way, you are confident and not ashamed because you are manifesting behaviour that is in keeping with the manifestation of the nature of Christ and fits into His being present with you.

Here is another verse from John that seems to have a much different meaning than usually given by most preachers. I believe that these verses were intended to challenge us to recognize that we need to grow up into real "sons" who know their Father and want to be like Him.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the ~~sons~~ (little children) of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him (God the Father -- NOT Jesus) not. Beloved, now are we the ~~sons~~ (little children) of God, and it ~~doth not yet appear~~ (*phaneroo* passive = has not yet been manifested) what we shall be (i.e., **when we grow up as sons**): but we know that, when he (God the Father -- NOT Jesus) shall ~~appear~~ (*phaneroo* passive = be manifested) (IN/BY US -- as His sons), we shall be like him (God the Father); for (because) we shall see (perceive) him (God the Father) as he is. And every man that hath this hope (the hope of being like God) in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (1 John 3:1-3)

Let us look again at two verses in 2 Corinthians, noting what actually is to be manifested through us now and increasingly so in the future:

Always bearing about in the body **the dying of the Lord Jesus**, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest (*phaneroo*) in our body. For we which live are always delivered **unto death for Jesus' sake**, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest (*phaneroo*) in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor. 4:10-11)

It is clear that the Cross is a paradigm for us of the quality of life that Jesus wants to develop and manifest through us. Following is a list of scriptures that point to such cruciformity as our goal in seeking to be like Jesus. For more study of this subject, you are urged to read through the book *Conformed to His Death=LIFE!* and the thesis *Cruciformity -- The Foundational Paradigm for Discipleship*. Both of these are available at www.becruciform.com.

I am convinced that the Lord is far more interested that He be manifested in and through us in ways stated below than for us to be preoccupied in speculating how and when He might otherwise "be coming"!

TABLE I — LIKENESS TO JESUS = CRUCIFORMITY

Mat. 16:24, 25: Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. (See also Mark 8:35, 10:21; Luke 9:23, 24, 14:27)

Mark 10:39: . . . Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, (See also Mat. 20:23)

John 12:23-25: Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

John 15:12, 13: My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Acts 5:41: The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

Acts 21:13: Then Paul answered, . . . I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name [cruciform nature] of the Lord Jesus.”

Rom. 8:29, 36: For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers . . . As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

Rom. 12:1, 2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind

Rom. 15:1-3: We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”

1 Cor. 4:12-16: . . . When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world. . . . Therefore I urge you to imitate me.

2 Cor. 2:15, 16: For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. . . .

2 Cor. 4:10-12: We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

Gal. 6:14: May I never boast except in the cross our of Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Gal. 6:17: Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

Eph. 5:2: and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Eph. 5:25: Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Phil. 1:29: For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him,

Phil. 2:5-8: Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Phil. 3:10: I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

Col. 1:24: Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

2 Tim. 1:8: So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God[.]

Heb. 12:1-4: . . . let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

Heb. 13:12, 13: And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.

1 Pet. 2:21-23: To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

1 Pet. 3:17, 18: It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,

1 Pet. 4:1 . . . since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

1 Pet. 4:12, 13: Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

1 John 3:16: This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

1 John 4:10: This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Rev. 12:11: They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

5. ERCHOMAI and HAYKO – "ACT OF COMING"

A. Erchomai & Hayko-- Coming Physically/Metaphorically

The verb *erchomai* occurs over 600 times in the New Testament and usually means a physical action of "coming" or "going". The verb *hayko* occurs only 27 times and usually has a similar meaning. When these verbs apply to time, days, seasons, ages, calamities or the Kingdom, they have more of a metaphorical meaning. The following examples show that they also can have a metaphorical meaning when applied to people, including Christ.

Erchomai

To become a follower:

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come (*erchomai*) after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (Mat. 16:24)

To follow in time:

And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one (*erchomai*) after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose (Acts 13:25)

To appear on the earth or in public, be born:

For John came (*erchomai*) neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came (*erchomai*) eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children (Mat. 11:18, 19)

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come (*erchomai*) in the flesh is of God (1 John 4:2)

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came (*hayko*) from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. (John 8:42)

To recover his right mind:

And when he came (*erchomai*) to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! (Luke 15:17)

To become, grow (worse)

And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew (*erchomai*) worse, (Mark 5:26)

To arrive at a time

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I (*erchomai*) unto this hour. (John 12:27)

B. Christ's "Comings" to the Churches of Revelation

Of special significance are the references to Christ's promise to come to the churches of in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3. Note these were actual churches and His comings must be interpreted first of all as His coming to them physically or spiritually during their actual historic existence.

Ephesus

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come (*erchomai*) unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. (Rev. 2:5)

Apparently, they did repent at that time, but later Jesus **did come** as He promised He would; according to history, Jesus **came** in judgment, causing the witness of that local church to shine no more in that area; the Christians were dispersed to other places.

Pergamum

Repent; or else I will come (*erchomai*) unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. (Rev. 2:16)

I have not found evidence that they did repent or not and do not know if Jesus came as He said He would. However, it is clear in the letter that He said He would come and would address the specific situation that existed at that time. The "sword of my mouth" is obviously symbolic and not a literal sword.

Thyatira

But that which ye have already hold fast till I come (*hayko*). Rev 2:25

The context shows that Jesus promised to come in order to cast Jezebel on a bed of suffering and make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent. Thus, this coming referred to a coming in judgment on Christians, where sickness was the judgment.

Sardis

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come (*hayko*) on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come (*hayko*) upon thee.(Rev. 3:3)

Here again, the coming of Jesus is in judgment to Christians.

Philadelphia

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come (*erchomai*) upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. (Rev 3:10) Behold, I come (*erchomai*) quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. (Rev 3:11)

In these verses, Jesus promised to protect this church from the tribulation that was coming on the whole world. These Christians were already reigning -- wearing

crowns -- they were to make sure that no one will take these crowns from them. It is not clear what kind of "coming" is referred to, but Jesus was going to make the overcomers "pillars in the temple of my God". Remember, he is talking primarily to those Christians in the 1st century and He is making a promise to them. The total current church was the "temple of God".

Note also that in verse 12, the New Jerusalem was "coming down" (*kataballo*) out of heaven -- a present participle, denoting progressive present action.

Laodaceai

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come (*eis-erchomai*) in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Rev. 3:20)

Jesus said that He was "about to spit them out of my mouth" -- Obviously, doing so implies a "coming to them". His promise to rebuke and discipline (verse 19) also implies a "coming to them". However, He promised the individuals that would repent and thus "open the door", He will come into their lives to have fellowship.

C. Preparing a Place and Coming Again (John 14:2-3)

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come (*erchomai*) again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:2-3)

The "Place": Where Jesus IS -- We ARE

The verse above is probably one of the best known verses in the Bible, but seldom interpreted in the light of its context. The strange translation of "abiding places" as "mansions" has given many Christians wild visions of luxurious houses in heaven. The "place" that Jesus is referring to and His "coming again" is extensively described and explained in this chapter and the next two.

The word in verse 2 that is incorrectly translated "mansions" is a noun from the verb *meno*, "to abide, dwell", which is found many times in this chapter and the next. As you read each verse, consider that *meno* refers to our living in the place that Jesus was referring to when He said "that where **I am**"; Just as Jesus was living in the Father, so we live in Him -- this place in Him is the place that through the Cross and resurrection and Pentecost, He made it possible for us to live in.

Abide (meno) in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it **abide (meno)** in the vine; no more can ye, except **ye abide (meno) in me**. I am the vine, ye are the branches: **He that abideth (meno)** in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man **abide (meno)** not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye

abide (meno) in me, and my words **abide (meno) in you**, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (15:4-7)

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye **(meno) in my love**. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall **abide (meno) in my love**; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and **abide (meno) in his love**. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might **remain (meno) in you**, and that your joy might be full. (15:9-11)

"I Will Come Again"

As the list of verses above indicate, Jesus was telling the disciples that He would come again and take them to be in the place where He was then dwelling, a place in the Father, that also included the Father living in Him. Note the following verses that indicate that He came in and through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to enable them and us to live in Him. **Remember, He was talking directly to the disciples and thus these promises to them would have to be fulfilled for them in their lifetime.**

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: **I will come to you (His disciples and us)**. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but **ye see me**: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and **ye in me, and I in you**. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and **I will love him, and will manifest myself to him**. (14:16-21)

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and **we will come unto him, and make our abode with him**. (14:23)

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and **come again unto you (His disciples)**. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. (14:28)

A little while, and ye (His disciples) shall not see me: and again, **a little while, and (His disciples) ye shall see me**, because I go to the Father. (16:16)

It seems clear that Jesus is saying that His coming to them at Pentecost will in some ways **be better for them than His physical presence** had been. The dramatic change in His disciples at Pentecost certainly demonstrates this to be true. Many seem to yearn for Jesus to come much as He was in the flesh. It seems that we, like the disciples, have not understood or appreciated much of what it means to live or abide in Jesus nor much of what it means that He and the Father live in us now. His spiritual presence now is meant to be of far greater impact on us than His physical presence was or will be. In fact, His future appearing in a resurrection body can only change the world if that Presence is also accompanied by a universal Presence in each member of His body by His Spirit.

To abide in Christ means to totally depend on Him to produce His nature in us. Therefore, everything we know about the cruciform nature of Christ then becomes our nature as He works it in us. His dependence on the Father is worked in us through abiding in Him and thus we learn to have the same dependence on His indwelling presence as He had on the Father's presence in Him.

It is clear that all of this abiding will be experienced in its fullness only when all the restrictions of living in this earthly body are removed. However, it is also clear that Jesus was primarily referring to the experience of His disciples at and after Pentecost and thus for our experience also here and now.

D. Let Christ Come and Bring Unity

In many other scriptures, *erchomai* is used to apply to "comings" of Christ. Christians differ in their understanding of the interpretation of such comings. Of most importance is that we seek for Him to come now, be manifested in love in us now so that we may love those who differ with us in the interpretation of Scripture. We all can embrace **all** of His comings and be prepared for any type of interpretation if we truly allow Him to come through us to others as Love.

All of His comings are and will be glorious, let us experience to the maximum those comings that are for us now and not let any teaching decrease our pursuit of experiencing His comings today and tomorrow and each day of our lives!