

The coming of Jesus: 2

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[0 : 00] Let's pray just now. Father, we thank you that there is a day that all creation is waiting for. Father, we thank you that there is a day that all creation is waiting for.

! An awesome day, a day of eternal destiny, a day of heaven and hell, a day of glory or eternal shame.

Amen. Help us, Lord, in our weakness, in our frailty, in our sinfulness, to hear about that day and to hear about the Lord of that day as we think together this morning.

We pray for the help of your Holy Spirit, by whom things as yet unseen can be made real to us and that we may live our lives in the light of a day yet to come by faith and in hope.

We ask you to deliver us from all distractions, free us from everything that would hinder us putting the first things first.

[1 : 14] and we pray for your great help then, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Well, the subject we're looking at is the coming of Jesus Christ. We're looking at a second talk on that subject. And as you can see, I think, I am trying to make the transition from overhead projector technology to digital projector technology.

It's a painful path, I have to say, but I'm trying. What I can do on the overhead is show you a bit at a time, and I'm struggling to try and do that on the screen up here, but what I might be able to do is zoom the bits I don't want you to see.

It's rather clunky. And if I press it wrong, it leaps on several pages. So if it doesn't work, I've got the overheads here. We'll do it on the projector anyway.

So this is our subject, the coming of Jesus Christ. We looked at it last time. Let me tell you what I mean by the subject. It is that the Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory.

[2 : 47] He will raise the dead, and he will judge the world in righteousness. The wicked, and there are wicked, the wicked will be sent to eternal punishment, and the righteous, that's those who have had their sins forgiven through Jesus Christ, will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God.

And on this great day, God will make all things new and will be glorified forever. That's the subject that we're looking at, the coming of Jesus Christ.

And the text that I would like to refer us to is this text in Acts chapter 1, which we looked at, I think, two or three sessions ago.

Let me remind you of it. This is after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was still on earth for 40 days, meeting people, showing himself raised from the dead.

And at the end of that period, in Acts chapter 1, verse 9, he answered questions. He gave them a mission. And after he had said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

[4 : 24] They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men in white stood beside them. Men of Galilee, they said, why do you stand here looking into the sky?

This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.

So he will come back. And that's the text there on the screen. Does that point to show up? Yes, it does. Little hand. He was taken before their very eyes.

A cloud hid him from their sight. And these two men, whom we presume were angels, said, men of Galilee, this same Jesus, he's taken from you into heaven, will come back.

the word, the word, that's a ch'i, echomai, will travel back, will come back, in the same way you have seen him go into heaven. So here's our little picture of it.

[5 : 28] If I can get that to go up. Ah, that's exactly what I didn't want to happen. Ah! Right. Now we have to be very patient. Thank you.

All right, let's see if I can make it, do it properly. I wanted it to go up. That's better. So here are the men watching.

They watch him go from earth to heaven. He goes on a cloud. The cloud in the Bible indicates divinity, indicates the place of God, the presence of God.

He currently is in heaven, in the place of power. We had a session about that, a few Sundays ago. But the promise is, he will come.

He will come back, in the same way you saw him go. He will come with the clouds of heaven. And last time, we simply asked the question, is this important?

[6 : 40] And the answer was, yes. It is absolutely vital. It's absolutely vital, for every believer, because this is what your life is about.

It isn't really about God helping you catch the bus, and helping you remember things when you go to Sainsbury's. God may well help us with those things, but that's not what it's about.

What it's about is the great day, when he comes again, and heaven and hell is decided, and we enter into the kingdom prepared for us, from before the world was made.

That's what it's about. And if you're not a Christian, or if you're just dipping your toes, on the edge of Christianity, this is vital for you, because this is saying to you, everything depends on your response to Jesus Christ now.

On that great day, it will be too late to change anything. You need now to sort out what your life is about, where your life is headed, who you belong to, who you trust, who forgives your sins.

[8 : 09] Is it important? Yes, very much. Let's try and look at the second slide. Yeah. How is it important?

Why is it important? Well, it's important because, as I've said, it's the fulfillment of everything. I'm not sure I can think of a single thing in the Bible, which doesn't have a line that leads from it, to that great day.

All the promises focus in the end, on that great day. All the themes focus in the end, on that great day. It is the day of fulfillment, and the fulfillment of everything.

So I'd like us to think about that this morning, by considering three words used to describe this great event. So I'm going to give you the Greek.

Don't be too confused about it. It just helps me remember which one's which. So number one is a word, to come, meaning come in the sense of travel.

[9 : 22] To travel by bus, to come by bus, to come by train, to come on foot. There's a normal Greek word for traveling, ercomai.

That's one word. To my surprise, it's very rarely used of the coming of Christ, but it is used. Number one, coming. Number two, words which mean revelation, to unveil, to reveal.

And my word there is apocalypsis, which in English, you will know the word apocalypse, apocalyptic, which is usually taken to mean disastrous, but it actually means unveiling, revealing.

And then the third word, which I think is perhaps most strange to us in the English language, is the word parousia, which means coming in a particular sense of being present.

It doesn't emphasize the travel, it emphasizes the presence, compared with the absence, and it has a particular use for a royal visit. So if the queen came to visit us, it would be a parousia.

[10 : 38] So those are the three things we're going to look at. I press the button, and let's look at these things. So number one, coming as in traveling from place to place.

Matthew 24, 30. So I'm now quoting from some of the teaching of Jesus.

He was teaching about the future, about the unfolding of history, about the great cataclysmic events that would happen, certainly to Jerusalem, and also at the very end of the world.

He's talking about the way his kingdom grows, and the things that take place as his kingdom develops.

And in 24, 30, he refers to a time in this way. At that time, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn.

[11 : 57] They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds from one end of the heavens to the other.

So that's the quote I'm going to think about. And the word come is where? Here. See the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

Now this particular text is quoting another text in the book of Daniel. I'm not going to deal with that, but it does need to be dealt with, and hopefully when we have Bible study in a couple of weeks' time, we'll be able to look into this in more detail.

But let's just take it as it stands here. Let's see what the text is saying. So I've drawn a little picture, and I have to tell you that when I'd finished drawing it, I found a program on my computer that tidies people's handwriting.

What a pity I didn't find that before I started. But anyway, there we are. Here's the picture. The clouds of heaven. He comes with the clouds of heaven.

[13 : 22] The Son of Man comes. He travels. It doesn't actually say where he travels to, and there's a little issue about that which I won't go into now, but he comes on the clouds of heaven.

He comes with great glory, and he comes accompanied by angels, and the angels have a loud trumpet call.

The trumpet of God will sound. I don't know why the trumpet of God will sound. Presumably, it's to sort of draw everybody's attention and mark the occasion, like doesn't Wall Street open by the ringing of a bell?

And at the end of an auction, on the auction program, he hits the gavel against the bench, doesn't he say, sold?

He makes a noise, and the end of the world, there'll be a trumpet. The trumpet will sound, and there will be gathered from the four corners of the earth the chosen of God, the elect of God.

[14 : 27] And this is the picture that we're given of what will happen. Now, I don't know what that will look like. I can't really get my head around how Jesus can appear when there's a globe, so that he's simultaneously seen by everybody all around the globe, but it says that every eye will see him, and there will be this great end of everything, the trumpet call of God, the coming of the Son of Man.

And that is what I will present to us for this word, to come. Let's look at the next word. I think. Click. Let's look at this word. Revealing, showing, unveiling.

Apocalypsis. A disclosure. A revelation. It's used of prophecies, so in 1 Corinthians, where Paul says, suppose you're all together, and you have a, God gives a prophecy, a revelation.

He'd use the word apocalypsis for that. But this is the same idea, but a different use of it. I'd like to suggest to you the idea of invisible ink.

[15 : 54] Now, cast your mind back to your youth, which may be easier for some than others. But do you remember ever trying to make invisible ink? I think lemon juice, you could make it.

I think in the, I think we had the Reader's Digest book for young people, or something. It said how to make invisible ink. And so here's the paper, and here's the pen, and there's the lemon juice, or whatever.

And then you write on it, and nothing can be seen until later. The writing's there, but it's only seen later. And when you put a candle underneath it, which sounds a bit risky, doesn't it?

Health and safety, what they allowed people to do in those days, or whatever you did to it, suddenly the writing appears. It's unveiled, it's revealed.

It was like that all the time, but only now is it demonstrated and shown. Manifested would be the way of, the rather old-fashioned word for it.

[17 : 04] So I've got three texts about this great day of revealing. Romans 2, 9. So the common thread is not just that this is the use of the same word, but this is the same day.

And here are examples of what will be revealed. So Romans 2, verse 9. I hope I've got this right. Now have I got it right?

I think it's a bit earlier than that, isn't it? I think it's verse 5. I think I've misread a 9 for a 5. Romans 2, verse 5.

And he's writing a letter, but I think what he's doing is telling us the dialogue and the debate that he's had in many synagogues and meeting places.

And somebody's put up their hand and said, I don't agree with what you're saying, Paul. It's nonsense. And Paul says back, well, you have no excuse.

[18 : 12] You condemn other people and God will judge things that are done wrong. And he says in verse 3, three, so when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and...

No, have I got it right? Let me go on. Do you think you will escape God's judgment?

Do you, or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness and tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you to repentance?

The fact that you're still alive and breathing is not evidence that God doesn't exist. It's evidence that despite your stubbornness, God is very kind.

That's what it's evidence of. And because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath when his righteous judgment will be...

[19 : 19] apocalypsis, will be revealed. If you imagine a bull in a farm and the bull is asleep and for some perverse reason you decide to go into the pen where the bull is and poke it.

I would say that's an unwise thing to do because the more you poke that bull, it might be patient for a while but the more you poke it, the more angry it's going to be in a moment.

And he says, Paul says, what you are doing, every time you hear about God's judgment and you do nothing about it, you are storing up wrath for yourself.

It's like you're poking God just to see whether he'll do anything about it. You are storing up wrath for yourself for the day of God's wrath when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

It's there all the time. It's there all the time. But on that day it will be revealed. And there's a thing about people being angry because for most of the time, most of us, we get angry for no good reason.

[20 : 45] We just get cross. And it's not worth, in some ways, it's unpleasant. But if you look at it objectively, you say, well, there being a bit of a silly old twit, getting angry about that.

And it's almost comical. But what I would like you to imagine is the wrath of God in which he has long been patient and not an ounce of his anger is misplaced.

It is all totally justified. It's totally what it ought to be. And that's what's going to happen on the great day when his righteous judgment is revealed.

That is a warning. Romans 8, 19 is another revelation. Romans 8, verse 19.

Paul, talking to a church, perhaps marginalized, perhaps persecuted, perhaps just coping with life the same as we do, I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

[22 : 12] The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. This is a very interesting theme. On that day, the sons of God, the children of God, will be revealed.

And what he's saying is we are now sons of God. But what that is like, what it looks like, the full magnificence of it, the full honor of that, the full glory of that, is yet to be revealed.

And on that day, it will be revealed what the sons of God are. Think of the invisible writing. It's there already, but you don't see it.

Brothers and sisters, I can say it as I look out upon you all. You're very fine people, but you don't look hugely different to anybody else that I meet in Brighton, up and down London Road.

You just seem to be a cross-section of ordinary people. But on that day, the full glory of what it is to be a Christian will be revealed.

[23 : 39] It says, they will shine like the stars, no, shine like the sun. And the Christian that you are sitting next to will be revealed as more amazingly glorious and wonderful that you could possibly imagine.

That's what it says. The creation wakes in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

And let's look at one more text under this heading, 1 Peter 1.

Which is what Martin read to us. The text about the sons of God being revealed, I think it would produce within us a longing.

What a great day that is. to be aiming for. I can hardly imagine what that means. But there's something there that's promised that is more wonderful than I can get my head round here on earth.

The sons of God being revealed for what they are. And the 1 Peter, chapter 1, verse 13, says, prepare your minds for action.

[25 : 01] Be self-controlled. Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. And of course, he is the great revelation of that day.

That he has always been glorious. He has always been king. He has always been at the right hand of the Father. But it doesn't show that on that day, his full glory and holiness and grandeur and magnificence will be revealed for everyone to see.

And that's the great day that we're looking forward to. And he says, set your hope on that. The NIV says, set your hope fully.

I'm not sufficient Greek expert to correct a translation in that sense. But what I could say is that the word reminds me of the word for purpose.

The word for purpose is telos and the word here, set your hope, teleos. Purposefully, I think would be a good idea to have in our head. Set your hope purposefully on the grace that's to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

[26 : 23] Make that part of your strategy for living. Make that part of the reason and the meaning of your life that you're setting your hope purposefully on the grace that was to be revealed.

A number of us remember the lady that Ray referred to earlier, Jenny Long. She was a church member here since, I would say, her teens, would it be her teens?

For a good, good number of years. And her father was a church member here before. So some of us can remember George Long who was a character. And I can tell you about both of these people. Their hearts were set on Jesus Christ and the grace that was to be revealed on that last day, grace that was to be given when Jesus Christ was revealed.

Now Jenny had looked forward to her retirement. She worked in the office at the university, University of Sussex. But I don't think she will be too disappointed.

[27 : 33] She had hoped for retirement and we would hope that with her. But what she has now is actually far better. To be with the Lord ready for that great day. Purposing.

Set your hope purposefully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. revealed. And another word like it.

It isn't exactly the same. It's the word fanero. You get epiphanero from which we have epiphany which means again to show to be revealed.

And this word is translated to appear. Same sort of thing as you realise. Let's look at 1 John 3 2. 1 John 3.

Let me read from the Bible I have in front of me. How great is the love the Father has lavished on us.

[28 : 49] That we should be called children of God and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Dear friends now we are children of God and what we will be has not yet appeared. But we know that when he appears benero we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.

Notice what it's saying again there? It's the day of revealing of Jesus Christ. Like the invisible ink he's there glorious all the time but the great day will reveal how glorious he is.

And when he is revealed we too who belong to him whose lives are bundled up with him we too will be revealed and we'll surprise ourselves.

You'll be surprised at the glory of other believers and you'll be probably most of all surprised at the glory that is yours.

[30 : 07] what we will be has not yet been made known has not yet appeared but we know that when he appears we shall be like him and our eyes will have the capacity to receive the rays from his glorious face that shines like the sun our eyes now would burn up if we were to try and see that but our eyes will have the capacity to see him as he is because we shall be like him.

What an amazing thought that is. And he says if that's what you're thinking about if that's what you're going for how tawdry are the distractions of earth which tempt you off course if you're hoping in that then there is a purity which comes into your life everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as Jesus Christ is pure that would be a great thing to be wouldn't it blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

And let's look at 1 Peter 5 verse 4 which is another appearing text. This is written to church leaders in those days of persecution and marginalization but I believe there is an application wider than that.

The church leaders are told in verse 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you but being examples to the flock.

He says that's what you're to do as church leaders. And he says to these men and when the chief shepherd appears you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

[32 : 41] What an amazing thought that on that day when the chief shepherd appears he has a crown for those who've loved him and served him.

A crown for me? Doesn't seem right but that's what it says. He has a crown of glory that will never fade away.

The appearing of Jesus Christ him and us he will appear on that great day as he is as he always has been but he will appear as such and amazingly and it takes a bit of believing doesn't it but we're told to believe it we appear as we truly are as children of God not as what we so often confronted with in our own lives our failure our confusion our getting things wrong and getting mixed up that's not according to God who we truly are we will appear as we truly are he will appear in glory and we will be like him we will be glorious beings and he comes king crowned in splendor and on that great day of generosity he gives crowns to his people and I guess they cast their crowns before him in wonder and amazement but he gives them crowns next picture third word parousia coming there isn't an exact equivalent of this in

English it doesn't give you the exact idea so let's try and take it a step at a time the first meaning and the basic meaning is of presence rather than absence so it's coming not in the sense of traveling but as distinct from being absent it also means a royal visit which we'll come to in a moment but here's some examples of the word in terms of presence rather than absence so let me quote you from 1 Corinthians 16 verse 17 where Paul says Paul says I was glad when Stephanus Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived because they had supplied what was lacking from you they refreshed my spirit and yours also he says well they weren't here and I was a bit downcast and I was a bit low about it but then they arrived and here they are arriving and here we are welcoming them and I was glad at the parousia the coming the presence of these guys and I was really encouraged because instead of thinking about them as absent they were right there in front of me present let me give you another example of this which is a rather what shall

I say rather interesting this is a critique of Paul the apostle it's in 2 Corinthians 10 verse 10 where they say they're not particularly keen on him it's always a mistake not to be keen on the apostle Paul because the Lord Jesus sent him and if we're not keen on him we're not being keen on Jesus 2 Corinthians 10 verse 10 this is what his critics say his letters are weighty and forceful but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing what he actually said is his letters are weighty and forceful but his parousia when he's there when you stand in front of him when you see him face to face he's weedy and you see that he's losing his hair and he's got spots and all the things ordinary people have he's unimpressive

[37 : 04] Paul says you shouldn't make judgments like that but anyway it's an interesting use of parousia isn't it have I got a picture there yes okay so here's presence rather than absence so I've drawn Samuel and Catherine and this is this is Samuel and Catherine before they got married that they communicated on Skype and Facebook so that's communication as with a real person but it's nothing like as good as being present with each other and what we're talking about is at present we relate to the Lord Jesus well not with Skype and Facebook but by faith and by prayer and by the Bible but on that day we will see him face to face we will be in his presence there will be his parousia okay next picture let's think of the royal visit now I'm not giving you all the historical background to this

I'm just going straight to the picture of it this was what a royal visit would be like we've got some historical records of that I'm just going to turn to see whether that's reasonably visible would there be any use in not in turning those lights off at all it's visible is it okay because I so let's think of the story of the royal visit this is before the royal visit we once went to the where did we go to when we saw the queen the eden project the eden project which is a big garden thing in Cornwall I don't wish to say that before the queen came they were unready but here's somewhere that might be unready there's cobwebs there's rubbish there's dirt stinks it's not suitable for the royal visit and somebody comes and heralds and says the queen is coming the king is coming get things ready prepare the way of the lord sort things out that need to be sorted out so people get the paint paint things up tidy away the rubbish sort out the ashtrays in their car all the sorts of things that you would do if the queen was coming and they prepare the way and then when the royal visitor comes what would be the way of doing it in those days would be that the citizens would go out of the city to meet the royal procession before they actually got there and then they'd go out and meet the king en route and then they would accompany the king back to the city so there is the king being accompanied by the citizens there is the king on his royal visit and there is all sorts of things happen when the king comes

I've put a little list here it's an act of royal power the king is saying I wish to assert I do rule over this bit of the kingdom and my parousia is saying I'm in power so it is a statement of power power if you go and visit somewhere Winchester I don't know I'm just randomly thinking of places that you could

go and visit if you got off the train there they wouldn't say oh you're very great come see your great city because you don't own it but if you were the king or the queen and you go they would say this is your city it's a statement of power it's a time of reunion so the people who have not seen the king or queen see the king or queen and are together with the king or queen it's a time of accountability because I dare say the ruler will come up to the town hall and say to the chief executive it's my money you've been spending

I'd like to see the books please what you've been spending the money on been mending the potholes have you been helping the weak have you what have been doing with my money oh expenses lavish council parties that wasn't what I said you see a time of accountability a time of joy you would put out bunting when the king or queen comes you would have celebrations and a time of transformation well well I think to be honest even when the best king or queen on earth visits somewhere the transformation only lasts for a little while doesn't it because they paint things very very quickly for the queen to come and the paint falls off fairly quickly as well and the new built properties that were put up just for the queen or just for the king they probably fall down fairly quickly this is a royal visit

I'm sure you get the idea let me let's transfer that thought to the parousia of Jesus Christ because we're promised he will come on a royal visit it's the word most often used and it looks to me as though I haven't actually have I given a single example of it this is very remiss of me because nearly all the references to the coming use this word parousia that's what we're looking forward to his royal arrival when he comes to rule in power and to say this is my kingdom when you might have been puzzled by this about meeting the Lord in the air but it's like the citizens who go out of the town to meet the king on his way we will meet him in the air a time of reunion and joy we will see him face to face a time of accountability he will say let me see what you've done and he will reward those who've done his will and those who've squandered his resources he will be very angry with a time of disproportionate reward for those who have genuinely sought him genuinely trusted him there will be quite mind bogglingly disproportionate rewards we're told even a cup of cold water given for the Lord

[44 : 17] Jesus will not lose its reward reward for a cup of cold water I mean that's nothing but Jesus says no I think that's very valuable and the Lord will see all the things that have been done for him that perhaps nobody else has seen maybe you don't think they're very much either but the Lord will say that matters to me a time of disproportionate reward come blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared from you prepared for you from before the world was made and a time of transformation he makes all things new so the transformation that the Lord Jesus brings is permanent there's no more sorrow no more sighing no more tears no more sickness no more death all these things are gone I make all things new on that day you would sue me for negligence if I had not asked you are you ready for this day what an awful thing it would be if on that day you said well you never told me

I needed to get ready you never told me I needed to do anything well I'm telling you now on that day you will meet Jesus Christ whether you believe in him or not you definitely will meet him please be ready for meeting him please be ready by having your sins forgiven now by asking him for a new heart now do everything by all means at all costs to make sure that on that day you are not in embarrassment shame disgrace get ready for the coming of the Lord and for believers those who as it says love his appearing what an amazing day that will be it will make everything worthwhile it will be a day where all heartaches are healed and a day of unbelievable glory there is a crown awaiting on the day of the coming of the Lord let's sing together a ending ending ending! ending ending ending ending! ending ending! ending ending