

JESUS CANNOT HAVE RETURNED IN 1914

According to the teaching of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WBTS) there was an **invisible** return of Jesus in 1914 (when he became present) and there will yet be a future **invisible** return when Jesus comes to bring destruction on the wicked. This two phase return scheme is based on the use of the Greek words concerning Jesus return, so that Jesus' presence (Greek *parousia*) began in 1914 as the first phase, and his future revealing (Greek *apokalypsis*) at Armageddon will be the second phase.

BASED ON A DISPENSATIONALIST TEACHING

The WBTS teaching was originally based on the currently very popular teaching of dispensationalism (Please see Volume 5 STUDIES 14-17 showing why this scheme is incorrect) which proposes that Jesus will, in the future, return **invisibly** and resurrect Christians and then rapture them and living Christians away to heaven (1 Thess. 4:15-17) before the Great Tribulation. Then seven years later, after the Great Tribulation, including the pouring out of God's wrath on wicked mankind, the second phase will occur when Jesus returns again, but this time **visibly** to set up the Kingdom. This scheme was as the result of a vision by Margaret MacDonald a woman from a church in Scotland in 1830 and was popularized by J.N Darby, the founder of the Plymouth Brethren. It is commonly called *the pre-tribulation rapture at any moment* scheme.

Even if the Dispensationalist scheme was the biblical sequencing of events for Jesus return, the WBTS scheme would still be incorrect because from Study 2 it is evident that the return of Jesus will be visible. Furthermore, because of the failures, prior to 1914, of the dates set by the WBTS for Jesus' revealing (Gk *apokalypsis*) they have altered their scheme to some extent so that the biblical times of 3½ times, 1290 days, 1335 days are no longer applied to future events. However, they still present an open-ended gap between the 1914 presence of Jesus (Gk *parousia*) and his bringing of Armageddon (Gk *apokalypsis*). As of October 2010 there is a 96 year gap since October 1914 when Jesus was supposed to have arrived (his **parousia**) and the yet to occur Great Tribulation when Jesus is revealed.

DOES THE BIBLE SHOW A TWO PHASE RETURN OF JESUS?

Do the Scriptures allow for any long gap between phases from 1914 to when Jesus returns to bring destruction on the wicked at Armageddon – the Great Tribulation?

JESUS WILL RETURN ONLY ONCE

❖ "...Christ...the **second time** that he **appears** (Gk *opsthesetai*)...to those earnestly looking for him for [their] salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

Jesus' first appearance was in the 1st century. This verse clearly shows that there is only "**a second time of appearing for Jesus and which is for salvation**" and not a 1914 return and then a later Armageddon return. There is not a part A second presence and then a part B second presence. This is further confirmed by understanding the contexts in which the Greek words for his return were used in the Scriptures. In addition to the words *parousia* and *apokalypsis* there are two more Greek words involved that are **associated with the apokalipsis**. These are **epiphaneia** and **erchomai**.

LEXICAL KOINE GREEK WORD MEANINGS:

parousia (noun) = **a coming to be present**.

The Greek-English lexicons never define *parousia* as 'invisible presence' and the Scriptures never qualify it with the word for *invisible* to change it to mean an **invisible** presence. Furthermore, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* shows that *parousia* refers to: "someone's coming in order to be present."

apokalypsis (noun) = a revealing

epiphaneia (noun) = an appearing, a manifestation; **phaneroo** (verb) = to be manifested

erchomai (verb) = to come; [**elthon** = having come].

So a literal revealing of someone means that they are visible as does someone's appearing.

THESE FOUR TERMS DESCRIBE THE SAME EVENT ON THE DAY JESUS RETURNS

When one searches the Greek text of the Kingdom Interlinear Translation for the occurrences of the Greek words *parousia*, *apokalypsis*, *epiphaneia*, *phaneroo*, *erchomai*, and *elthon* in relation to Jesus' return and the events surrounding it, and then make comparisons, it becomes clear that all these Greek words apply to and describe a single visible event.

'PAROUSIA' OCCURS WHEN 'APOKALIPSIS' OCCURS

- ❖ "...the flood...so the presence (**parousia**) of the Son of Man will be" (*Matt. 24:39*).
- ❖ "...the flood...on **that day** when the Son of Man is to be revealed (**apokaliptetai**)" (*Luke 17:27, 30*).

Clearly Jesus uses the flood as a single event illustration of his return. So Jesus' *parousia* cannot have begun at a time different to his being revealed. They are one and the same event in contrast to the teaching of the WBTS.

'PAROUSIA' OCCURS WHEN 'EPIPHANEIA' OCCURS

- ❖ "...by the manifestation (**epiphaneia**) of his presence (**parousia**)" (*2 Thess. 2:8*).
- ❖ "...when he is made manifest (*visible phanerothe*)...at his presence (**parousia**)" (*1 John 2:28*).

Again it is evident that Jesus' *parousia* cannot be separated from his "manifestation" which will be a visible appearing. It will be as visible as lightning:

- ❖ "For just **as the lightning** comes out of eastern parts and shines over to western parts, so the presence (**parousia**) of the Son of Man will be" (*Matt. 24:27*).

'PAROUSIA' OCCURS IN THE SAME CONTEXT AS 'ERCHOMAI'

- ❖ "...the flood...so the presence (**parousia**) of the Son of Man will be" (*Matt. 24:39*).
- ❖ "...you do not know on **what day** your lord is coming (**erchetai**)" (*Matt. 24:42*).

These comparisons show that the **parousia** of Jesus cannot be separated in time from the other terms used for his return, namely, his revealing (**apokalypsis**), his appearing (**epiphaneia/phaneroo**), or his coming (**erchomai/elthon**). So, concerning Jesus' return there cannot be two different events separated by 96 or more years – one in 1914 and the other yet future.

JESUS RETURNS ONLY AFTER THE GREAT TRIBULATION

- ❖ "...for then there will be **Great Tribulation** ... **Immediately after the tribulation** of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven....and they will **see the Son of Man coming** on the clouds" (*Matt. 24:21, 29*).
- ❖ "...to repay tribulation to those who make **tribulation for you...relief** along with us at the revelation (**apokalipsei**) of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels ... at the time he comes (**elthe = erchomai**) to be glorified in connection with his holy ones and to be regarded **in that day with wonder**" (*2 Thess. 1:6,7, 10*).

Clearly because the **Great Tribulation** has not yet occurred it is evident that Jesus' one-time return cannot have occurred in 1914 or any time up to now.

REWARDS ARE GIVEN ONLY WHEN JESUS APPEARS

- ❖ "...Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his **appearing** (*epiphaneian*) and his *kingdom* ... there is laid up for me the *crown of righteousness*, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will *award me* on that day ... also to all who have loved his **appearing** (*epiphaneian*)"
(2 Tim. 4:1, 8 ESV).
- ❖ "...so that the proof of your faith...may be found to result in *praise and glory* and honor at the **revelation** (*apokalipsei*) of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).
- ❖ "And when the Chief Shepherd **appears** (*phanerothentos*), you will receive the *unfading crown* of glory" (1 Peter 5:4).
- ❖ "When He **appears** (*phanerothe*), we will *be like Him*, because we shall see him just as he is"
(1 John 3:2).

REWARDS ARE GIVEN AT RESURRECTION TIME

- ❖ "...you will be *repaid* at **the resurrection** of the righteous" (Luke 14:14).

Therefore, the rewards to Christians are not given at an earlier so-called secret parousia, but when the kingdom comes at Jesus' appearing and revelation.

ALL CHRISTIANS MUST BE RESOLUTE UNTIL THE DAY CHRIST RETURNS

The one time return of Christ must occur on a particular **day** and the Scriptures show that all living Christians (no Christians are ever alive in heaven. Please see STUDY 12) must be on earth to continue to work faithfully for Christ because:

- ❖ "...each man's *work will become evident*; for **the day** will show it up because it is to be revealed with fire" (1 Cor. 3:13).
- ❖ "He who began a good work in you *will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus* ... in order to be sincere and *blameless until the day of Christ*" (Phil. 1:6, 10).
- ❖ "...hold fast what you have *until I come*" (Rev. 2:25).
- ❖ "...knowing the time...for now *our salvation* is nearer...and **the day** is near" (Rom. 13:11, 12).

As seen in STUDY 6 "**the day of Jehovah/the day of Christ**" occurs after the great tribulation. Logically both events are yet in the future. So the above encouragements would be meaningless if the body of Christ were not here on earth to greet Jesus when he returns.

NOBODY KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR OF CHRIST'S RETURN

- ❖ "Concerning *that day* or hour **nobody knows** neither the angels **nor the Son but only the Father**"
(Matt. 24:36).

In the reasoning of Jehovah's Witness this still allows for one to endeavour to calculate the year and perhaps the month. However, this is incorrect understand because in Acts 1:6 Jesus said "*it does not belong to you to get knowledge of the times and seasons.*" And certainly such calculations by Jehovah's Witnesses have never worked for them. Nevertheless, Jesus' words about "*the day or hour*" do not refer to the day or hour for the Great Tribulation [wrongly linked to *Armageddon*] as taught by the WBTS, but rather to Christ's *parousia* or coming to be presence/arrival. This Greek term is used in

verses 3, 27, 37, 39. Additionally verses 42 and 44 use the word **coming** and verse 46 has **arrival** of the master. Yet in contradiction of Matthew 24:36 the WBTS claimed prior to 1914, and continues to claim, that October 1914 was the time that Christ's *parousia* began. Yet, there is no scriptural evidence that Christ has yet arrived. If there was, then the kingdom would have already improved the world substantially rather than having no major positive effect and, in fact, allowing the world to get worse in many ways.

If, as the WBTS claims, Jesus was the agent of the Genesis creation (please see Volume One STUDIES 10 and 11) he would have known when it was created and therefore could have calculated when 6,000 years of man's existence would have been completed as the time for Armageddon to take place (supposedly shortly after **1975**). Yet he did not know the time of his return and therefore would not be able to give the time of Armageddon. In fact he warned:

- ❖ “Look out that you are not misled; for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and ‘**The due time has approached.**’ Do not go after them” (*Luke 21:8*).

Yet one of C. T. Russell's books was entitled 'The Time is at Hand'.

EARLIER WBTS MISAPPLIED DATES FOR CHRIST'S PAROUSIA

Jesus returned and the Millennium began in 1873 *Thy Kingdom Come, p.305.*

" " " " in 1874 *The Finished Mystery, p.386.*

SUMMARY OF GREEK LANGUAGE AND SCRIPTURAL POINTS

1. JESUS RETURNS ONLY ONCE

- ❖ “...Christ...the **second time** [*first time was in the 1st century*] that he **appears** (*Gk.opsthesetai*)...to those earnestly looking for him for [their] salvation” (*Heb. 9:28*).

The Scriptures use the Greek words *parousia*, *apokalypsis* (a revealing), *epiphaneia* (an appearing), *phaneroo* (to be manifested), *erchomai* (to come) all with reference to Jesus' one time visible return. So there cannot be a coming in 1914 and a later coming at Armageddon.

2. NOBODY KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR OF CHRIST'S RETURN

- ❖ “Concerning *that day* or hour [of Christ's *parousia* *i.e. not a reference to Armageddon*] **nobody knows** neither the angels **nor the Son but only the Father**” (*Matt. 24:36*).

Yet in contradiction of Jesus the WBTS claimed prior to 1914, and continues to claim, that October 1914 was the time that Christ's *parousia* began.

3. REWARDS ARE GIVEN ONLY WHEN JESUS APPEARS

- ❖ “...so that the proof of your faith...may be found to result in *praise and glory* and honor at the **revelation** (*apokalipsei*) of Jesus Christ” (*1 Peter 1:7*).

The WBTS teaches that the Christian Greek Scriptures are written specifically to the 144,000, but that they are resurrected at Jesus' *parousia* long before his 'revelation' at Armageddon. Yet the above verse says that they only get their rewards at the **revelation** (*apokalipsei*) of Jesus Christ" *i.e.* Armageddon and therefore not from 1919 onward.

4. JESUS RETURNS ONLY AFTER THE GREAT TRIBULATION

“...for then there will be **Great Tribulation** ... **Immediately after** *the tribulation* of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven....and they will **see the Son of Man coming** on the clouds” (*Matt. 24:21, 29*).

Currently the WBTS acknowledges that the Great Tribulation has not yet occurred. Therefore, Jesus cannot yet have returned in 1914. Furthermore, because the Scriptures show that it will be a one time return it must still be future.

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SUGGESTED READING

The Approaching Advent of Christ by Alexander Reese (unfortunately this book is very difficult to obtain).

