

Definition of Terms

Second Coming

A term closely related to the Rapture (and in many theologians' minds inclusive with it) is the Second Coming of Christ. In New Testament Greek, the word "coming" is mainly represented by two words *parousia* and *erchomai*. *Parousia* means:

present, presence, a being present, a coming to a place. Presence, coming or arrival. A technical term used of the coming of Christ (Matt 24:3; 1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Thess 2:8; 2 Pet 3:4; 1 John 2:28); the Son of Man (Matt 24:27, 37, 39); the Lord (1 Thess 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess 2:1; James 5:7-8; 2 Pet 1:16); the day of God (2 Pet 3:12). The term *parousia* refers to the Second Coming of the Lord, but the Second Coming is not just one event taking place at a particular time. Rather it is made up of a series of events. We can understand which event is referred to only by a careful examination of the context in which the terms *parousia* or *erchomai* (to come) occur . . .

The coming of the Lord at the end of the seven-year tribulation period is what the Lord describes in Matt 24:15-22, 32-34; Mark 13:14-23, 29-30 (cf. Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-23, 32-33; 23:28-30). The judgement of the Lord is designated as a specific coming by the verb *elthe*, the aor. subjunctive of *erchomai* indicating that this specific coming is prior to the final judgement of the world. This coming is also called *apokalupsis*, revelation (Rom 2:5; 8:19; 1 Cor 1:7; 1 Pet 1:7, 13; 4:13) and *epiphaneia*, manifestation (2 Thess 2:8; 1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 1:10; 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13). This is going to be the Last Day and will bring about the termination of the existing order of things.

Thus the coming of the Lord or His *parousia* consists of several comings which are in reality stages of a continuous process.¹

Erchomai means:

to come, to go, move or pass along, intrans. in any direction, as marked by the adjuncts or often simply by the context. The forms from *elthon*, the 2d aor., however, more frequently signify "to come" . . .

in a fut. sense, apparently, but only of what is certain to take place (John 4:25; 14:3, 30; Rev 1:7) . . . the One who was (or had been) and the coming One (Rev 1:4, 8; 4:8) . . . *epi*, upon, with the gen. of thing, implying rest upon (Matt 24:30, "upon the clouds" [a.t.]) In the sense of to come again, back, to return, . . .

Two of its many derivatives; *eleusis*, advent, coming; *katerchomai*, to come down;²

¹Zodhiates, "parousia," *Dictionary*, 1123-4.

²Zodhiates, "erchomai," *Dictionary*, 656-8.

Erchomenon, the noun form of *erchomai*, is also translated “coming or arrival.”³ Two of the three other Greek words used in the New Testament in association with the Second Coming were mentioned above in the definition of *parousia*: *epiphaneia* and *apokalupsis*. The third is *phaneroo*, meaning, “to make apparent, manifest, known, show openly.”⁴ *Epiphaneia* means, “An appearing, appearance speaking of both the first Advent of the Lord and the second and future appearance of the Lord.”⁵ *Apokalupsis* means:

Revelation, uncovering, unveiling, disclosure. One of three words referring to the Second Coming of Christ . . . The other two words are *epiphaneia*, appearing . . . and *parousia*, coming, presence . . . Apokalupsis, a grander and more comprehensive word, includes not merely the thing shown and seen but the interpretation, the unveiling of the same. The *epiphaneiai* (pl.), appearances, are contained in the apokalupsis, revelation, being separate points or moments therein. Christ’s first coming was an *epiphaneia* (2 Tim 1:10); the second, an *apokalupsis*, will be far more glorious.⁶

³*The Online Greek Bible*, “*erchomenon*,” 2004, <http://greekbible.com> (31 October 2005).

⁴Zodhiates, “*phaneroo*,” *Dictionary*, 1435.

⁵Zodhiates, “*epiphaneia*,” *Dictionary*, 644.

⁶Zodhiates, “*apokalupsis*,” *Dictionary*, 225.