



An Extract from
**Christ and the
World of Thought**

by

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by a searching Bible Student

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I was advised by **Professor F F Bruce of Manchester University** to read **this book of Professor Lamont's**.

I knew Prof. Bruce personally and when I wrote to him, about my studies in the New Testament in which I had discovered that the Apostles, in the Gospels and letters, expected and preached that **the Second Advent** was to occur in **their own life time**.

The answer he gave, was that my studies, had shown the correct understanding of the New Testament.

I was shocked by my own discovery and his answer.

Prof Bruce also told me he believed the futurist position was **untenable** and the **New Testament** taught **the Second Advent** was **expected** in **the apostles life time**.

I asked him why his views were not generally known and he said he did not want to upset his close brethren.

When I tell other Christians about my views they go off at the deep end, even though, they have not studied the subject to any depth.

Prof. Bruce said he could not get a wholly consistent view of **the Second Advent** from the Gospels and at that time in **1978**.

I understood exactly what he meant.

It took me **15 years** to resolve the difficulties.

The major break through came by comparing the scriptures Ezekiel 34,39,47 and Rev 20,21.

I had read these scriptures hundreds of times and the problem which was located there, never occurred on me.

I know of **no book** or **writer** that has ever realised **the problem** posed in these **two books** which is **the Key** to unlock the correct **Prophetic Model**

Bertrand Russell.

on **Matt.24.34** he said that **Jesus was a false prophet** because the Kingdom did not come in the Apostles lifetime.

“this generation shall not pass till all these things have taken place”.

Even C S Lewis. [became a Christian in 1931]

in his book **“The World’s Last Night”** 1960

“It is clear from the New Testament that they (disciples) all expected the Second Coming in their own lifetime. And worse still, they had a reason, and one which you will find very embarrassing.

Their Master had told them so. He shared, and indeed created, their delusion. He said in so many words, ‘this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.’ And he was wrong. He clearly knew no more about the end of the world than anyone else.”

C S Lewis had the same opinion as the atheist **Bertrand Russell**.

Now both of these gentlemen were absolutely wrong.

The Second Advent DID take place **at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70**, just as **The Lord Jesus** prophesied

They like **most Christians** they have the wrong understanding of what would take place at **Jesus Christ’s Second Coming**, called **THE PAROUSIA** .

This is exactly **the same mind** set of **the Pharisees** who had the wrong expectation about the **First Coming of the Messiah**.

Western and Latin Christians do not understand **the Hebrew Prophets mode of speech**. It has a special name called **Hyperbole**.

This means simply such things as the following, **Isa 13.13**

*Therefore I will make the heavens tremble;
and the earth will shaken from its place
at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.*

This found its fulfilment in **the overthrow of Babylon by the Medes**. Certainly **NOT** putting **the earth out of orbit**.

Isa 13.17 *See, I will stir up against them [Babylon] the Medes, who do not care for silver and have no delight in gold.*

It refers to political and social upheavals not to be taken literally.

This extract by **Prof. Daniel Lamont** has to be read at least **4 times** to get the full understanding of what he is saying.

He is desperately trying to make **Christians** think about what they have been taught and **believe**.

The truth is that **99%** of those who **become believers** accept **the doctrines** that their teachers tell them.

The **majority** of so called **teachers** seldom if at all, make **an effort** to familiarise themselves with **the Greek** or **Hebrew languages**.

This is necessary because **the Bible is not in English**.

Too many translations contain **the underlining beliefs** of the translators.

Every Christian must use an **interlinear New Testament** in **Bible study**.

The main reason why **the views** in **this booklet** are **immediately** rejected, is because most **person's preconceived notions** about **the Second Advent**, stops them thinking outside **the box**.

The Pharisees preconceived notions of what they expected **the Messiah to do**, caused them to reject **the Lord Jesus**. **The Lord** spoke the truth and the **Pharisees** were in **great error**.

Do not have the same mind set as the Pharisees !

***“Remember seek and you will find,
knock and it will be opened.”***

***“You cannot put New Wine (The truth)
into Old Wine skins (embedded wrong beliefs)”***

Christ and the World of Thought

By **Daniel Lamont,**
Professor of Practical Theology
New College,
Edinburgh,
An Extract

The second criticism of these two schools [of thought on the Second Advent] is that both of them **uncritically assume** either that **Jesus** predicted "**the end of the world**" as **close at hand**, even within that generation, or that His disciples **mistakenly** supposed Him to have predicted it.

This assumption is made not only by the two extreme schools in question but also by **the majority of modern theologians and New Testament scholars**. In spite of all this authority we venture to hold that it is **A HUGE MISUNDERSTANDING**.

Let it be admitted that Jesus did predict an event **of COSMIC significance**, which was **to occur within THE LIFETIME** of some who listened to His words.

To what kind of event did He refer ? That is the whole question. The assumption with which we have issue—varies in particulars, but in general it is to the effect that **Jesus expected**, or was supposed by **His disciples to have expected**, that **He would return in Person to the earth within THAT GENERATION**, execute judgment upon His enemies, transform the course of nature, and reign over a pure and undying race. In short, **the existing physical order was to terminate in something like forty years from the time of the prediction**.

Such a change did not occur, and so the assumption passes on to the inference that **Jesus was mistaken** or else that His **disciples reported Him wrongly**.

This alleged mistake is often pointed to with **the finger of scorn by enemies of Christianity**, by **Christian theologians it is minimized**; it was an error which **did not** affect the substance of the faith; the faith indeed **proved its vitality** by triumphing over the "**disappointment**" caused by **the non-occurrence of the predicted event**; and so on.

Even so clear and profound theologian as **Emil Brunner** follows the

device to which explanation has often been made... that **"in the literal sense the critics are right: Jesus and the Apostles did identify this 'soon' with a point in the time-series; and this definition of a special time has proved to be incorrect."**

But no one who is quite unsophisticated is likely **to be satisfied with such minimizing.**

If **Jesus** or His Apostles **made the alleged mistake**, we can hardly object to some honest minds putting them, in this particular matter, on a level with those earnest but misguided souls who, down through Christian history, have predicted **"the Second Coming"** for some date in the near future, and **have thereby fortified millions in their skepticism.**

No truth-loving person can very well deny that the four portraits of Jesus given us in the four Gospels reveal One who, even **"according to the flesh," possessed incomparable balance of mind.** Is it likely that this balance **forsook Him** in the matter which we are now discussing ?

One can hold very strongly that it would not be like the Jesus whom we otherwise know, to commit Himself to a very definite time-prediction (**not "the day or the hour," but the generation**) unless **He had the best of reasons to know that it would be fulfilled.**

This conviction forces one **to examine the prediction very closely** to make sure that one has understood its meaning. It is possible, after such an examination, to come to the conclusion that the mistake is **not in the apostolic tradition but in an interpretation of it which, beginning very early, has persisted until today.** Even in New Testament times we have evidence of it.

The difficult verse (John 21.23) in the Appendix to St. John's Gospel which runs; **"Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die"** seems meant to serve as **the apostolic correction** of the very misinterpretation of which we are speaking. Note the distinction between **"brethren"** and **"disciple."** The Second Epistle of Peter also, which is probably the latest document of the New Testament, **bears traces of the misinterpretation.**

The time has come for New Testament scholarship to apply itself to the task of **is entangling the apostolic tradition in eschatology from the misunderstandings which began so early** and which still cast their shadow upon the Faith of the Church.

What did Jesus predict for the close of His own generation ? certainly not the end of the world in the commonly accepted sense of that phrase. The translation of the New Testament phrase:

"the consummation of the age" by **"the end of the world"** is proof of

the bondage of our translators to the misinterpretation. Jesus **never once** foretold, nor is He ever reported to have foretold, **the end of the world in that generation.**

But His prediction had reference to something of **cosmic significance.** **What was it ?** It was essentially something in **the unseen world.** It would be accompanied by repercussions upon the earth, **signs which any eye could see,** in particular the judgment upon the Jewish race.

But in its essence it could be discerned *by* Faith alone. It was to be the completion of His redeeming and revealing work. Not till **His Parousia,** which means **His Presence** but **not His bodily Presence** on earth, would the work which His Father had given Him to do produce its full benefit to Faith.

His Parousia would mark the end of the age then in progress and the inauguration of the final age when everything that is human would be judged by its relation to Him and when **all who believed on Him would immediately pass, at death, into His Presence.**

The standpoint of the New Testament is in **"the last days"** of the old age. The forty years or so during which the work of the Apostles was accomplished were no doubt regarded by them as **the last days of the old order** because they had **the word of Jesus** for it. During that time **the Parousia of Jesus was believed by them to be ever more imminent.**

In one of his later letters (Phil 4.5) St. Paul writes: **"The Lord is at hand."** The vindication of the above interpretation of **the Parousia of Jesus** would require a volume all to itself. But an outline of the argument may be attempted here. I shall indicate it under four heads.

1. Man's redemption finds its completion in the redemption of his body, and this completion is one part of the essence of the Parousia of Jesus. In the last days of the old order believers at death **"slept"** in Christ. **In the new order believers at death** would **"wake"** at once into His Presence.

The Thessalonian Christians **were troubled** at the thought of their friends passing away before the age of the Parousia arrived. St. Paul comforts them with the assurance that those who survive and live on into the **"Parousia"** will not anticipate [go before] those **who die before the new age arrives.** When the *new* age comes in, those who have already fallen asleep in Christ will at once enter His Presence in their full risen life.

They will be the first to "rise."

Those who live on into **the age of the Parousia** will not **"sleep"** at all.

At death they will **"wake"** at once into **the Presence of the Lord.**

This is surely the grammatical sense of 1 Thess 4.15-17, though our

Authorized translators have obscure it, as they have obscured the whole subject, through their obsession by the old misinterpretation.

St. Paul's use of **apocalyptic language in the 17th** verse has misled many into supposing his meaning to be that believers who survived **at the Parousia would not die at all but be instantaneously caught up into glory.**

But what he means, as is plain from the whole context, is that those who live on into the age of the Parousia will pass at once, **when they die**, into **the Presence of the Lord**, to be gathered there with their loved ones concerning whom they were needlessly anxious. When, later in this epistle (Thess 5.10) St. Paul uses the words: **"whether we wake or sleep,"** he does not mean **"whether we escape death or not,"** but **"whether we die in the Parousia-age or before it comes."**

In any case they have to die. St. Paul never suggests that he or any one else will not die. He always takes death for granted.

The trouble is that we read **the customary interpretation**, which I regard as **the old misinterpretation**, into his words.

But St. Paul is not responsible for that.

We cannot appreciate the New Testament emphasis upon **the Parousia of Jesus** so long as we lack the seriousness of the New Testament thought of death. In our age, when the body has come to mean so much and the soul so little, we are apt to feel that the only serious thing about death is the dissolution of the body.

This feeling springs from the double illusion that the soul is of little or no consequence and that God does not matter. There is no illusion of that kind in the New Testament. Death is not simply pathetic; it is tragic; and the tragedy lies here, **that death cuts away all the earthly props on which we have been leaning and leaves the soul in naked guilt before the living God.**

Many people of to-day boast openly of their superiority to this aspect of the fear of death. They suppose that they have *got* above God. In their own way **they have robbed death of its sting.** But what they have really done is to take the frozen serpent, sting and all, into their bosoms. With **"man's unconquerable levity" they laugh at death while they are still on this side of it.** But no laugh can alter the fact of sin or the fact of death or the fact of God.

It is not the passing out from life that makes death so serious; it is the passing into another form of life. So Jesus assumed, and the Apostles preached, and those who heard them believed.

The fear of death borrows its dark colour from the fear of God. That is the

same thing as saying that "**the sting of death is sin.**" Into this plight of sinful man came the sinless Son of God. In what Emil Brunner has called the self-movement of God. Christ came from God and returned to God.

His coming to man was not complete until He had returned to God, and His Parousia was the final term in His return to God. It was then that the age of His Presence was born He had prepared a place for His own people.

The familiar words, "**I go to prepare a place for you,**" (John 14.2) are a statement of the supreme eschatological fact for Faith, expressed in spatial rather than in **apocalyptic** terms.

The children of this world scoff at both kinds of terms, but Faith understands. When that place was prepared, death was robbed of its sting for all who were and are in Christ. The last enemy was destroyed. The Apostles, living as they did in **the last days of the old age**, were lyrical in their prospect of it; and if our Faith is like theirs, we too must rejoice that it happened as Jesus had foretold.

2. A formal difficulty arises in connection with the forty years or so, which elapsed between our Lord's Resurrection and His Parousia. Why so long a time ? Many are reconciled to the third day for His Resurrection, who are not so easily reconciled to the fortieth year for His Presence.

We make no attempt to explain the delay, for while it impinges upon the Time-series it is essentially transcendent. But there are certain historical circumstances which fit in to the fact of this delay and which have a reconciling effect upon the mind. **Israel as a whole had to get its chance before being judged.**

The Jews were responsible for the rejection of Jesus, but the entire Jewish race could not be incriminated. The bulk of it was scattered over the Roman Empire; and Israel as a race had yet to prove how it would react to the Gospel of a Crucified and Risen Messiah. **To give Israel its opportunity was the first task of the Apostles.**

From the words of Jesus Himself and from the words and actions of the Apostles we can gather the urgency of the command of Jesus that the Gospel should be preached to the Jew first and then to the whole world. Israel must have its full opportunity before the **telos** [end], and that meant **the work of a generation at least.** Jesus counted upon the fidelity and zeal of His followers.

This brings us to another historical consideration, which possesses even greater weight.

The Revelation in Christ had to be completed by His Apostles. It is amazing that this fact receives so little attention from theologians. As St. Paul puts it, the Apostles were the foundation of the Christian edifice, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. This was the apostolic view of the matter. In another connection we have emphasized the simple fact that there can be no Revelation unless there is Faith to receive it.

The Faith is an integral part of the Revelation itself. **...It was the momentous task of the Apostles, as first-hand witnesses, to receive the Revelation and hand it on by their testimony to others.**

If they had failed in their task, which of course is an empty hypothesis, there would have been no Revelation, no Gospel, no Church. Conceivably they might have failed in either of two ways: by a misunderstanding of the Person and Work of Jesus, or by a failure to be faithful when days of persecution arose.

As to the former, there is **not a single hint** in the New Testament of any fear that **Jesus might have been misinterpreted by His Apostles**. As to the latter, their fidelity could only be proved by time and life and death, and it was so proved to the utmost. They gave their lives for Jesus and the Gospel. Everything depended upon their being true, and they knew it. Their life work was indispensable to the Revelation.

The earthly work of Jesus was not complete **till their work was done**, and the dawn of the Parousia marked that completion. Nowhere is clearer and nobler expression given to all this than in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation.

The apocalyptic form ought not to conceal the spiritual fact. There, after the Resurrection of Jesus is referred to, Satan is represented as being conquered in heaven and cast out.

This is an echo from a word of Jesus: (Luke 10.18)

"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" Satan had been busy accusing the brethren before God, no doubt bringing up to date his old taunt made familiar by the Book of Job: ***"Wait till the persecution comes; these fellows will then curse Jesus to His face."***

This is followed by one of **the most triumphant** passages in all literature:

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Rev 12.2) Note the emphatic **"they"** Michael (Rev 12.10) and his angels had conquered **Satan in heaven**; **"the brethren"** conquered him on earth.

They finished their work victoriously.

Meanwhile, there is a loud voice in heaven. "**Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ.**"¹ Here, as elsewhere in the Book of Revelation, the completion of Christ's work on earth is identified with the completion of the apostolic testimony.

According to the apostolic Faith, "**the self-movement of God**" which constituted the Christian Revelation had for its outstanding peaks the Birth, Baptism, Cross, Resurrection, and Parousia of Jesus.

These all transcended history, but all had their counterpart within history.

3. It is surprising that this line of thinking with regard to the Parousia of Jesus has been so little explored. It has its difficulties, of course, but any other interpretation has much more serious difficulties, and this one has **the advantage of preserving the unity and reliability of the New Testament.**

It was powerfully sketched a generation ago by **Alexander Brown of Aberdeen in his book entitled *The Great Day of the Lord.***²

This book, after passing through two editions, went out of print. Like most books it had its blemishes, and **Dr. Brown** was not regarded as in the front line of scholarship. But for incisive: thought, moral passion, and spiritual insight **I have read no book to compare with it** in its own field.

Dr. Hastings of dictionary fame reckoned it to be the truest of all expositions of the Book of Revelation, but scholarship in general passed it by on the other side. Why do so many scholars and so many who are not scholars insist **on assuming that Jesus and His Apostles were mistaken on this matter ?** To the New Testament at least it was a vital matter. New Testament scholars have **not proved** that **Jesus** is represented as predicting **His early return to earth in a form which would be visible to every eye. His judgment upon Jerusalem would be visible to every eye,** but that is very different. **Nor have they proved** that the New Testament represents Him as predicting an impending transformation of the existing physical order.

They merely assume it. The assumption that **the Parousia,** in its essence, was **something which any eye might see,** and which,

1. See my booklet '**The True Identity of Michael the Archangel**'

2. Math 24.6.7 The Lord told the disciples that '**soon**' they would hear of wars, Earthquakes. It was **Alexander Brown** who pointed out that in that **the first generation** that there were over **300 earthquakes** as the Lord had prophesied.

because no eye did see it, was therefore an unfulfilled expectation, has been so widespread from early times to our own day that it must have its roots in our common human nature.

I suspect that prosaic literalism is one of these roots. Let us see how influential this has been in generating the assumption in question. **Much of our modern scholarship is given to interpreting figuratively things in the New Testament which are meant to be taken literally and to interpreting literally things which are meant to be taken figuratively.**

It was natural that, when the Apostles passed away, apocalyptic language should tend to be **misinterpreted by the Greek mind, and perhaps still more by the Latin mind.** This tendency may account for the fact that St. John's Gospel, while preserving the apocalyptic facts, avoids apocalyptic language as far as possible. **We have substantial proof that Jesus did not take the scenery of apocalyptic literally but used it with the utmost freedom.**

To take only one instance, **Elijah was expected to return to earth** before Messiah came, and Jesus, when challenged by His disciples on the point, replied in effect that it was quite true about Elijah coming, but that **he had already come.**

And St. Matthew adds ***" Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist."*** (Matt 17.13)

That is to say, not only did **Jesus use apocalyptic scenery** very freely, but **His disciples also came to understand that He did so.** They were not likely to be literalists in such matters. The question which they put to Jesus regarding the predicted destruction of the Temple is illuminating in this connection. ***" When shall these things be ? And that shall be the sign of Thy Parousia and consummating the age ?"*** (Matt 24.3)

Note that there are **two questions** here, the first relating to events expected to be visible such as the destruction of the Temple, the second relating to events of a different kind which they presumed would be invisible. Indeed, the invisible events referred to in the second question are but one event.

Grammatically, **"Thy Parousia"** and **"Thy consummating of the age"** must be regarded as one thing. **The Parousia of Jesus** would, in the disciples' minds, be His consummating of the age. But the important point is that these disciples already distinguished between coming events which would be visible and those which would be invisible. Their double question is almost equivalent to: **" Will the destruction of the Temple be one of the signs of Thy Parousia"** [A sign of **His presence** (not His coming) means **His Parousia** is Invisible, so a sign is necessary PB]

For a **"sign"** in **the New Testament** is not a prelude to something afterwards to occur, but a visible accompaniment of something which is invisible. Their question therefore suggested the possibility of **the Parousia arriving without any one knowing it.**

The answer of **Jesus** bears out this interpretation of the disciples' question. **The destruction of the Temple would indeed be part of the sign required.** The sign of **" the Son of Man in heaven "** would be the judgment which was to fall upon Jerusalem and the Jews. Here He uses apocalyptic scenery, such as **" the stars shall fall from heaven"**¹ but only **a pitiful dullness** could imagine that **Jesus** meant **an actual dropping of the stars upon the earth.** Indeed it is about as certain as any such thing can be that not only He, but also apocalyptic in general, meant by this impressive figure that the moral and spiritual standards by which the chosen people had lived would be laid in the dust. And so it came to pass.

This was the inward side of the Jewish apocalypse. (Josephus Wars of the Jews Book V) tells us how incredibly depraved the religious leaders of the Jews had become before Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Book of revelation confirms the lurid tale by informing us that the Jerusalem of that day was spiritually called **"Sodom and Egypt,"** (Rev 11.18) synonyms for moral depravity and spiritual tyranny. Jerusalem and its Temple were in every way ripe for destruction. Jesus predicted all this and His disciples did not misunderstand Him.

They neither misinterpreted His apocalyptic figures nor confused **His Parousia** with its outward signs. They could not well do so when He added:

1. Matt 24.33 [R.V.] ***"...Instantly there are all the signs which usher in the Day of the Lord. The darkened sun, the lurid moon, the showers of meteors, the shrivelled heavens, the terror with which men call on the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them, are the metaphors of vast earthly changes and catastrophes. A first sight it might well seem as if they could describe nothing short of the final conflagration and ruin of the globe. But there is not one of these metaphors which is not found in the Old Testament prophets and in them they refer in every instance to the destruction of cities and the establishment of new covenants, or to other earthly revolutions. Not only had our Lord adopted these vivid Oriental symbols to describe the sign of His coming in the fall of Jerusalem and the close of the aeon..."***

See Isa 2.12,19; 13.10; 34.3,4; 50.3; 63.4; Jer 4.23; Ezek 32,7,8; Joel 2.10,21; 3.4,15; Hos 10.8; Nah 1.6; Mal 3.2; etc The extent to which the Apostle borrows the phrases of the Old Testament may be seen by taking Rev 1.12-17, and comparing it phrase by phrase with Zech 4.2; Dan 7.13; 10.5; 7.9; 10.6,11,12; Isa 49.2; Ezek 43.2 **" Early days of Christianity "** by F W Farrar page 447/8

*'When you see all these things, know you that He is near, even at the doors'*¹

The visible judgment was to mean that the Judge was there, invisible but very near. It was to mean also that He was very near to Faith as Saviour. The age of **His Parousia** would then have arrived when, in addition to giving them victory over life.

He would be ready to give them victory over death. *"The coming of the Son of Man in the clouds"* is **the impressive apocalyptic figure** for **the Son of Man** executing judgment. The judgment is something to which none can be oblivious. **The Jewish Apocalypse** was also to be a time of supreme trial for the followers of **Jesus** and especially for His Apostles.

It is seldom recognized with precision that **the Parousia** had its two sides. It meant on the one hand that **Jesus** was now the Saviour of His people from death as well as from sin, and on the other hand that He was now Judge of all the earth.

It was therefore something for Faith to rejoice in with joy unspeakable. At the heart of Faith was the *"good hope through grace."* But at the same time it was something whose advent was to be attended with sore trial for Christ's folk.

The Apocalypse was to be like a Golgotha to them. The earnestness of Jesus in warning His disciples in view of the great tribulation is unmistakable.

"Ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake."

"By your endurance ye shall win your souls."

They were never permitted to imagine that they would have an easy time in the approaching **telos** [end]. They would be persecuted, and most if not all of them would be killed before it came. Forewarned is forearmed. Jesus would be with them in the power of the Spirit and by this power they would conquer, but it would be a hard, hard battle.

The idea which is **so prevalent among modern writers** that there was **disappointment at the non-fulfillment of the Lord's prediction** is so far at least as the Apostles were concerned, as remote from all the realities of the situation as any idea could be.

How could they be disappointed when they expected nothing else and got nothing else than insolence and persecution from the world, and when they lived and died in the greatest of all faiths and the brightest of all hopes ? Their triumph was to be through tribulation.

The last days were days of increasing trouble and of increasing triumph.

In the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, **"the powers of the impending age"** (Heb 6.5) were already at the disposal of men of faith. And those men of Faith were actually completing the Revelation of God in Jesus. Of course they were doing it by the power of **Jesus** Himself.

One feels that in this whole question of Christian eschatology we have to **begin again at the alphabet of the New Testament.**

4. The last consideration to be mentioned in connection with this subject is that the foregoing interpretation of **the Parousia does not preclude the idea of a final judgment of mankind.** This world will of course come to an end, and the New Testament is no stranger to the fact.

But I have been dealing only with our Lord's definite prediction of **an impending cosmic event.** That event, in its essence, could only be known by Faith. The **Apostles expected it** and rejoiced in the expectation, and we should accept it as an accomplished fact and rejoice in the experience of it.

We are in the age of the Parousia. Faith can know the Presence of Christ to the utmost that is possible under earthly conditions and Hope can confidently expect to enter His nearer Presence when our day's work is done.

We should set no limits to what **His Presence** can mean to us now, but even at the best it is only an earnest and foretaste of what He will mean to us by and by.

It is important to recognize that **the Parousia is an age.** It began in an event, if we can rightly speak thus of something which, while it impinges upon history, essentially transcends history.

The Parousia is the Presence of Jesus, to Faith during this earthly life, and **"face to face"** in the life which is to come. **Its beginning, according to the prediction of Jesus, was to be attended with judgment upon Israel.**

But that was only the first term in the series of judgment. The other terms of the series would follow in due course. All the nations would be liable to similar historical judgment, now that the age of **His Presence** had come; they would in every case stand or fall by their attitude to Him. All judgment upon the earth was committed to Him.

It is particularly in the Book of Revelation that there looms up the picture of a more distant judgment of the whole Time series. That judgment will be both the **telos** and the termination of the existing temporal order.

In this age of **His Parousia**, Christ judges progressively "***all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues,***" but this process will take end in the final judgment of the temporal order itself.

How long that will be in coming is no concern of ours, for Revelation does not tell us. What it does tell us is to make our calling and election sure, so that we enter not into condemnation but into salvation.

It ought not to be necessary to add that the judgment upon **the Jewish race**, foretold by **Jesus** and fulfilled in **the year A.D. 70**, does not mean that the Gospel is less free to the Jew than it is to any one else. It is an unwarranted and **wicked idea that the curse of God rests upon the Jew.**

It would be an impertinence even to mention such an idea were it not that the behaviour of many nations, sometimes in the name of Christianity itself, seems to be rooted in it. Judgment by **the Son of Man** began at the House of God, and since **the Son of Man** was Himself of the seed of David, it is true to say that judgment is from the Jews.

But it is **Jesus** Himself who reminds us (John 4.22) that salvation also is from the Jews. Jews were the first to receive the Revelation and to know salvation; Jews were also the first to suffer judgment as a race in the new age. That judgment was the termination of their special religions privilege and leadership.

The destruction of the Temple was an instrument as well as a symbol of the universalising of Christianity. **Renan** tells us dispassionately that **if the Temple had not been destroyed Christianity** could not have been more than a mere appendage of Judaism.

But the classical statement of the liberation of the Gospel from the trammels of Judaism is in the Book of Revelation. In reference to the events of A.D. 70 we are there told that "***the temple of God was opened in heaven.***" (Rev 11.19).

Indeed this whole picture, which makes the close of the earthly temple coincide with the opening of the heavenly one, is a true and graphic, epitome of the whole New Testament doctrine of **the Parousia**. The purpose of this rough sketch of the relation between ethic and apocalyptic may not be immediately apparent.

But it is my conviction that the comparative ineffectiveness of modern Protestantism is due to indecision, and that this indecision is bound up with **the loss of the New Testament eschatological sense. New Testament eschatology**, its doctrine of the Last Things, is interpenetrated with the idea of apocalypse.

This idea, quite apart from the scenery in which it is embodied, is absolutely indispensable to Christianity.

It is a voice declaring the tremendous urgency of the Present. It is an authentic and authoritative voice. It is the very voice of God. It declares, first, what every one is capable of hearing, that the Present is pregnant both with Past and Future, that we carry our whole past along with us, and that we are pressing on inexorably to a goal ahead.

Our souls are making for something stupendously momentous.

And it declares, next, what Faith alone can hear. that the whole urgency of the Present is concentrated in the fact of Jesus Christ. **His Parousia, which is His Presence**, makes the Present what it really is. The Present is that in which we have to do with One who is Saviour and Judge.

If we decline to have Him as Saviour, then we must have Him as Judge. Our **telos** will reveal to every one of us which of the two choices we have made. The Day will declare it. The Present is the moment of decision, and decision is the theme to which this chapter tends.

The following extract is from 'The Parousia' by James Stuart Russell (1816-1895) served as Pastor of the Congregational Church in Bayswater, England during the years 1862 to 1888. He earned his M.A. degree from King's College, University of Aberdeen.

Then after this book was published, they honoured him with D.D degree. Two editions were published, first in 1878 and the second in 1887, both in London.

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The slightest attention to the language of Old Testament prophecy must convince any sober minded man that it is not to be understood according to the letter. First of all, the utterances of the prophets are poetry; and, secondly, they are Oriental poetry. They may be called hieroglyphic pictures representing historical events in highly metaphorical imagery.

It is inevitable, therefore, that hyperbole, or that which to us appears such, should enter largely into the descriptions of the prophets.

To the cold prosaic imagination of the West, the glowing and vivid style of the prophets of the East may seem turgid and extravagant; but there is always a sub stratum of reality underlying the figures and symbols, which, the more they are studied, commend themselves the more to the judgment of the reader.

Social and political revolutions, moral and spiritual changes, are shadowed forth by physical convulsions and catastrophes; and if these natural phenomena affect the imagination more powerfully still, they are not inappropriate figures when the real importance of the events which they represent is apprehended.

The earth convulsed with earthquakes, burning mountains cast into the sea, the stars falling like leaves, the heavens on fire, the sun clothed in sackcloth, the moon turned into blood, are images of appalling grandeur, but they are not necessarily unsuitable representations of great civil commotions, the overturning of thrones and dynasties, the desolations of war, the abolition of ancient systems, and great moral and spiritual revolutions. In prophecy, as in poetry, the material is regarded as the type of the spiritual, the passions and emotions of humanity find expression in corresponding signs and symptoms in the inanimate creation.

Does the prophet come with glad tidings ? He calls upon **the mountains** and **the hills** to break forth into song, and **the trees of the forest to clap their hands**. Is his message one of lamentation and woe ? **The heavens are draped in mourning**, and **the sun is darkened** in it's going down. No one, however anxious to keep by the bare letter of the word, would think of insisting that such metaphors should be **literally interpreted**, or must have a **literal fulfilment**. The utmost that we are entitled to require is, that there should be such historical events specified as may **worthily correspond with such phenomena**; great moral and social movements capable of producing such emotions as these physical phenomena seem to imply.

It may be useful to select some of **the most remarkable of these prophetic symbols** as found in the Old Testament, that we may note the occasions on which they were employed, and discover the sense in which they are to be understood, In **Isaiah 13**. we have a very remarkable prediction of **the destruction of ancient Babylon**.

It is conceived in **the highest style of poetry**. The Lord of hosts musters the host of the battle; the tumultuous rush of the nations is heard; the day of the Lord is proclaimed to be at hand; **the stars of heaven and the constellations withhold their light; the sun is darkened** in his going forth, **the moon ceases to shine; the heavens are shaken**, and **the earth removed out its place**.

All this imagery, it will be observed, which if literally fulfilled would involve the wreck of the whole material creation, is employed to set forth **the destruction of Babylon** by **the Medes**. [not the Persians] **Isa 13.17, Jer 51.11, 28, Dan 5.30, 6.1, 9.1**

Again, in **Isaiah 24.18-20** we have a prediction of judgments about to come upon **the land of Israel**; and among other representations of the woes which are impending we find the following:

‘The windows from on high are open; the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down; the earth is clean dissolved; the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; it shall fall, and not rise again,’

All this is symbolical of the civil and social convulsion about to take place in **the land of Israel**. In **Isaiah 34.3-4,8-10** the prophet denounces judgments on the enemies of Israel, particularly on **Edom, or Idumea**.

The imagery which he employed of the most sublime and awful description:

'The mountains shall be melted with the blood of the slain. All the host of heaven shall be dissolved; the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falls off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree.'

'The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall be waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever'

It is not necessary to ask. Have these predictions been fulfilled ? **We know they have been;** and the accomplishment of them stands in history as a perpetual monument of the truth of Revelation. **Babylon, Edom, Tyre,** the oppressors or enemies of the people of God, have been made to drink the cup of the Lord's indignation.

The Lord has let none of the words of His servants the prophets fall to the ground. But no one will pretend to say that the symbols and figures which depicted their overthrow were literally verified. These emblems are the drapery of the picture, and are used simply to heighten the effect and to give vividness and grandeur to the scene.

In like manner **the prophet Ezekiel** uses imagery of a very similar kind in predicting the calamities which were coming upon Egypt: **Ezek. 32.7,8.**

'And when I shall put them out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark. I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over them, and set darkness upon the land, says the Lord God'

Similarly the prophets **Micah, Nahum, Joel, and Habakkuk** describe the presence and interposition of the Most High in the affairs of nations as accompanied by stupendous natural phenomena: **Micah 1.3,4.**

'Behold, the Lord comes forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth, and the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place'

'The Lord has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebukes the sea, and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers.'

The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence: yes the world, and all that dwell therein. His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him' (Nahum 1.3-6).

These examples may suffice to show, what indeed is self evident, that in prophetic language the most sublime and terrible natural phenomena are employed to represent national and social convulsions and revolutions. Imagery, which **if literally verified** would involve **the total dissolution of the fabric of the globe and the destruction of the material universe**, really may mean **no more than the downfall of a dynasty**, the capture of a city, or the overthrow of a nation. The following are the views expressed by **Sir Isaac Newton** on this subject,

'The figurative language of the prophets is taken from the analogy between the world natural and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic. Accordingly, the world natural, consisting of heaven and earth, signifies the whole world politic, consisting of thrones and people, or so much of it as is considered in prophecy; and the things in that world signify the analogous things in this.

We only quote in addition the excellent remarks of a judicious expositor

Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh:

'Heaven and earth passing away,' understood literally, is the dissolution of the present system of the universe; and the period when that is to take place is called

'the end of the world [age].'

But a person at all familiar with the phraseology of the Old Testament scriptures knows that the dissolution of the Mosaic economy and the establishment of the Christian, is often spoken of as the removing of the old earth and heavens, and the creation of a new earth and new heavens.

The period of the close of the one dispensation and the commencement of the other is spoken of as

'the last days,' and 'the end of the world, [age].'

and is described as such a shaking of the earth and heavens as should lead to the removal of the things which were shaken. Hag 2.6; Heb 14.26,27.'

LIMITATION OF TIME IN THE APOCALYPSE¹

This is not a mere conjecture, it is certified by the express statements of the book. If there be **one thing** which more than any other is explicitly and **repeatedly affirmed in the Apocalypse it is the nearness of the events** which it predicts.

This is stated, and reiterated **again** and **again**, in the beginning, the middle, and the end. We are warned that

'the time is at hand;'

'These things must shortly come to pass'

'Behold, I am coming quickly;'

'Surely I am coming quickly.'

'Who is coming'

Yet, in the face of these express and oft repeated declarations, **most interpreters** have felt at liberty **to ignore the limitations of time altogether**, and to **roam** at will over **ages** and **centuries**, regarding the book as a **syllabus of church history**, an **almanac of politico ecclesiastical** events for all Christendom **to the end of time**.

This has been a fatal and inexcusable blunder.

To neglect **the obvious and clear definition** of the time so constantly thrust on the attention of the reader by the book itself is **to stumble on the very threshold**. Accordingly **this inattention** has vitiated by far **the greatest** number of apocalyptic interpretations.

It may truly be said that **the key** has all the while hung by the door, plainly visible to every one who had eyes to see; yet men have tried to pick the lock, or force the door, or climb up some other way, rather than avail themselves of so simple and ready a way of admission as to use the key made and provided for them.

1. This extract taken from the **"Parousia"** by **James Stuart Russell** (1816-1895) served as **Pastor of the Congregational Church** in **Bayswater, England** during the years 1862 to 1888. He earned his **M.A. degree** from **King's College, University of Aberdeen**. Then after **this book** was published, they honoured him with **D.D degree**.

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As this is a point of **the highest importance, and indispensable to the right interpretation of the Apocalypse**, it is proper to bring forward the proof that the events depicted in the book are comprehended within a very brief period of time.

The opening sentence, containing what may be called the title of the book, is of itself decisive of **the nearness** of the events to which it relates;

Rev. 1.1. ***The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants what things must shortly [ταχύ = without delay, strong] come to pass'***

And in case it might be supposed that this limitation does not extend to the whole prophecy, but may refer only to the introductory, or some other, portion, the same statement recurs, **in the same words**, at the conclusion of the book. (See Rev.12.6.)

Rev. 1.8. ***'Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.'***

The reader will not fail to notice the significant resemblance between this note of time and the watchword of the early Christians.

To say **ὁ καιρὸς ἐγγύς ἐστίν (the time is at hand)**

was indeed the same thing in effect as to say

ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς ἐστίν (the Lord is at hand), Phil. 4.5.

No words could more distinctly affirm the nearness of the events contained in the prophecy.

Rev. 1.7. ***'Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of him Even so. Amen'***

'Behold, he is coming' [ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται] corresponds to

'Behold, I am coming quickly' [ἰδοὺ ἔρχομαι ταχύ], in Rev. 22,7.

This may be called the keynote of **the Apocalypse**; it is the thesis or text of the whole.

To those who can persuade themselves that there is no indication of time in such a declaration as **'Behold, he is coming,'** or that it is so indefinite that it may apply equally to **a year, a century, or a millennium**, this passage may not be convincing; but to every candid judgment it will be decisive proof that the event referred to **is imminent**. (1 Corth 16.22).

It is the apostolic watch word, '**Maranatha!** **the Lord is coming**'

There is a distinct allusion also to the words of our Lord in Matt. 24.30,

'All the tribes of the land shall mourn' plainly showing

that both passages refer to **the same period; the same event.**

Rev. 1.19. **'Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.'**

The last clause does **not adequately express the sense of the original;** it should be

'the things which are *soon*¹ to happen after these'

[ὃ μέλλει (soon) γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα].

Rev. 3.10, **'I will keep you from the hour of temptation [trial], which shall come [is about to come] upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.'**

Indicative of the near approach of a season of violent persecution, shortly before the breaking out of which **the Apocalypse** must have been written.

Rev. 3.11. **'Behold, I come quickly.'**

This warning note is repeated again and again throughout **the Apocalypse**. Its meaning is too evident to require explanation.

Rev. 16.15. **'Behold, I come as a thief.'**

This figure is already known to us in connection with **the Parousia**.

St. Peter declared (2 Pet. 3.10).

'the day of the Lord will come as a thief' [in the night]

St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians,

'Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night' (1 Thess. 5.2).

And both these passages look back to our Lord's own words in which He inculcated watchfulness by the parable of

'the thief coming in the night.' Matt. 24.42-44,

1. The Greek word for "**soon**" appears in the Greek text here, even though most translations deliberately leave it out of the translation because of its implication of "**soon**" advent of the Lord. There are 31 of places where this word '**soon**' is deliberately left out because of its support for the Second Advent in the 1st century.

'SOON' MEANS 'SOON' !!!

See my booklet **"Conspiracy—Why is the word 'μελλω - soon' missing from the New Testament"** **Booklets can be download from www.biblemaths.com**

Here, again, the time and the event referred to are the same in all the passages, and were declared by our Lord **to lie within the limits of the generation then existing.**

Rev. 21.6,6, *'And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new....And he said unto me, It is done.'*

These expressions are evidently indicative of events hastening rapidly to their accomplishment; there was to be **no long interval** between the prophecy and its fulfilment.

Rev. 12.10. *'And he says unto me. Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand'*

Remember **Daniel** was told **to seal the book** as the events he prophesied were future of **Daniel's time.** **Revelation** was to be fulfilled in the **immediate future** so **John** was told to **not Seal** the book.

This is only the repetition in another form of the declaration in the preceding statement.

How can it be possible to attach a non natural sense to language so express and decisive ?

Rev. 12.6. *'And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true ; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly*

[τῶχει = without delay, strong] be done.'

This passage, which repeats the declaration made at the commencement of the prophecy (Rev. 1.1), covers the whole field of **the Apocalypse,** and conclusively establishes the fact that it alludes to events which were almost immediately to take place.

Rev. 22.7. *'Behold, I am coming quickly.'*

Rev. 22.12. *'Behold, I am coming quickly.'*

Rev. 22.20. *'Surely I am coming quickly.'*

This threefold reiteration of **the speedy coming of the Lord,** which is the theme of the whole prophecy, distinctly shows that that event was authoritatively **declared to be at hand.**

Thus we have an accumulation of evidence of the most direct and positive kind that the whole of the Apocalypse was to be fulfilled within a very brief period. This is its own testimony, and to this limitation we are absolutely shut up, if the book is to be permitted to speak for itself.

It appears, then, that if Scripture be the best interpreter of Scripture, we have in the Old Testament **a key to the interpretation of the prophecies** in the New. The same symbolism is found in both, and the imagery of **Isaiah, Ezekiel,** and the other prophets helps us to **understand the imagery** of **St. Matthew, St. Peter, and St. John.**

As the dissolution of the material world is not necessary to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, neither is it necessary to the accomplishment of the predictions of the New Testament.

But though symbols are metaphorical expressions, they are not unmeaning. It is **not necessary to allegorise them,** and find a corresponding equivalent for **every symbol;** it is sufficient to regard the imagery as employed to heighten the sublimity of the prediction and to clothe it with impressiveness and grandeur.

There are, at the same time, the true propriety and an underlying reality in the symbols of prophecy.

The moral and spiritual facts which they represent, the social and ecumenical changes which they typify, could not be adequately set forth by language less majestic and sublime.

There is reason for believing that an inadequate apprehension of the real grandeur and significance of such events as **the destruction of Jerusalem** and **the abrogation of the Jewish economy** lies at the root of that system of interpretation which maintains that nothing answering to the symbols of New Testament prophecy has ever taken place.

Hence the uncritical **and unscriptural figments of double senses, and double, triple, and multiple fulfillments of prophecy.**

That physical disturbances in nature and extraordinary phenomena in the heavens and in the earth may have accompanied the expiring throes of the Jewish dispensation we are not prepared to deny. It seems to us highly probable that such things were.

But the literal fulfillment of the symbols is not essential to the verification of the prophecy, which is abundantly proved to be true by the recorded facts of history.¹

My comments on the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The futurists have a problem with the New Testament because it teaches, **that the Second Coming of Christ**, took place **in the lifetime of the Apostles**. To work around this problem of the plain teaching of the New Testament, futurists have invented **a puerile teaching called Imminency**.

They call it, a doctrine that has been neglected by the Church.

There is **NO** such doctrine because it **was invented** by the futurists to **circumvent the plain sense of the words** of the New Testament. They teach, that when Peter in 1 Pet 4:7 says **“the end of all things is at hand”**, he means to keep Christians on their spiritual toes by urgency.

This idea of **imminency**, the futurists say, means that **the Second Advent** could occur at **any time in any generation**, and be **“at Hand”** in every generation. In others words, these plain words of Peter do not actually mean what they say that it really was the end of the Jewish age in **AD 70**.

The futurists wreck the plain meaning of the words.

This is the **worst kind of exegesis** [interpretation] that I have **ever seen**.

It is called twisting the scriptures for the futurists own ends because they cannot explain that if **the Lord came back in AD 70**, then why are we all still here in 2012. The plain truth is they have a **wrong understanding** of what **the New Testament means by the Second Advent**.

Peter knew that the Lord had told the apostles that in **their generation** [the Apostles life time] the Jewish age was to end, and the Kingdom would be established in Heaven by **the Parousia** [Presence] of the Lord.

Luke 21.29 **And He spoke a parable to them. "See," He said, "the fig-tree and all the trees. 30 As soon as they have shot out their leaves, you know at a glance that summer is now near. 31 So also, when you see these things happening, you may be sure that the Kingdom of God is near. 32 I tell you in solemn truth that the present generation will certainly not pass away without all these things having first taken place.**

Matt 24.34 **“I tell you in solemn truth that the present generation** [Apostles lifetime] **will certainly not pass away without all these things** [the Second Advent, the abomination of desolation etc] **having first taken place.”**

The Lord had stated in Matt 10:23 *“Whenever they persecute you in one town, escape to the next; for I solemnly tell you that you will not have gone the round of all the towns of Israel [telling the good news of the Kingdom] before the Son of Man comes.”*

And again in Matt 16:27-28 *“For the Son of Man is soon¹ to come in the glory of the Father with His angels, and then will He requite every man according to his actions, I solemnly tell you that some of those who are standing here will certainly not taste death till they have seen the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom.* The Greek Text, Weymouth, YLT, Concordant Version.

Sir Robert Anderson recognising that the New Testament teaches the imminency of the Second Advent and to explained it away by saying that the Prophetic Clock stopped in Acts 28 postponing the Kingdom.

This is a convenient explanation that makes the Scriptures mean anything. It's the same idea as invoking

2 Pet 3.8 *“with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and thousand years as one day”* or

Ezek 4.6 *“a day for each year”*

This has led millions being misled and after disappointment, unbelief sets in. This has occurred repeatedly over the last 2000 years.

Josephus book 6 Ch 2. Thus a star resembling a sword, stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year.

Days after that feast, on the 21st day of the month Artemisius, a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared;

I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and the events that followed it of a considerable nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds, and surroundings cities.

The prophecies of Christ's Second Coming, in which, every one of the Apostles and Evangelists described as ***near at hand***.

To these prophecies, Jesus Himself fixed the following:

Matt 24.34, 16.27-28, 10.23

1st . That His generation of disciples would not pass away before all these things would be fulfilled.

“So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation [those then living] will not pass away till all these things have taken place”

2nd . That some standing with Jesus will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

“The Son of Man is soon [μελλει] to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and he will repay every man for his deeds [his deed's not his opinions (beliefs)]. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom”*

3rd . Jesus said to the Apostles, they will not have visited all the cities of Israel before the Son of Man has returned.

“. . . and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

“This Decisive Proof that the Fall of Jerusalem was in the fullest sense, The Second Advent of the Messiah with all the events which happened, has a significance which it is hardly possible to over estimate. The events were the final end of the old Dispensation and were the full inauguration of the New Covenant of the Kingdom.” Dean F. W. Farrah

* μελλει [= soon, about to happen] This Greek word appears in the Greek Text of New Testament 31 times and is deliberately NOT translated, so as to hide the fact, that the Return of the Lord was to be in that First Generation of Christians.

Both Weymouth and Young's translations insert μελλω correctly. See my booklet, “Conspiracy”, μελλω_‘Soon’. www.biblemaths.com