

# **THE PAROUSIA ARGUMENTS**

## **(Review of Wayne Jackson's A.D. 70 Theory)**

by

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Speaking of the Parousia, (A.D. 70 Theory, page 41) Jackson places Matthew 24:3ff as a parallel text to 1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:1,8; James 5:7-8; 2 Peter 3:4, 12; 1 John 2:28. He argues that the term Parousia, which means presence (Philippians 1:26) takes on a technical connotation denoting the final return of Christ. Yet Jackson includes Matthew 24:3 to speak of the same coming as 1 Cor. 15:23, 2 Thess 2:1, 8, 2 James 5:7-8 and 2 Peter 3:4 among others. What a fatal admission to the weakness of Jackson's position!

Matthew 24:3ff is not about the end of the material world, describing a return of Christ yet future to us today. According to chapter 23, Jesus denounced the Pharisees, charging them with being sons of their fathers who murdered the prophets. (Matthew 23:30-32).

He then prophesies that they, like their fathers would murder those he would send to them, as they were about to put him to death. These murders would cause God to take vengeance upon the Jews for all the righteous blood shed on the earth beginning with Abel to Zechariah, "Matthew 23:34-35. Jesus sums up his message saying to the Jews that "assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation." The prophecy was fulfilled in the Roman invasion of Judea, A.D. 70.

Shortly after Jesus leaves the temple where he finished his teaching to the Pharisees and scribes, the disciples ask him concerning the temple and he shows them the stones which would be thrown down. They ask when it would occur. "Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be?' And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3)

The Greek word (translated world in the KJV) is actually the word "aeon" which means age. (See Strong's Concordance, # 165). The disciples ask, not about the end of the material universe, but about the end of the age, meaning the Jewish age. That is the age to which Jesus connected his Parousia and the destruction of the Jewish temple. He again used the same word "generation" as in chapter 23:36, to describe the time as a first century event. "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place." (Matthew 24:34)

It should be obvious why Jesus and His apostles spoke of the time of the Parousia as "near" and "at hand." Jesus marks the time for His generation. Thus

James writes, "You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." (James 5:8)

Once the time frame is established in one text, that time element must be evident and used to understand the meaning and time of every text on that same subject. For example, once the time of the Lord's Supper is established as the first day of the week, (Acts 20:7), the time applies to every passage where the supper is observed in the church whether it mentions the time or not, i.e. Acts 2:42, 1 Cor. 10:16; and 1 Cor. 11:26f). This is a basic principle of hermeneutics or interpretation.

When God promised Israel 70 years of Babylonian captivity, wherever we find mention of the Israel in Babylon whether the text explicitly mentions it or not, we must understand that the 70 years is involved. Likewise, when the scriptures say that Jesus was 3 days and 3 nights in the whale's belly, anytime the Bible speaks of his death, burial and resurrection (as in Romans 6:3,4) we must understand that the time element is always present.

Further, even in some of the texts used by Jackson above that do not mention time statements in the *immediate text*, have the time elements mentioned in their *immediate contexts*.

### **1 Corinthians 15:23**

Consider 1 Corinthians 15:23 which speaks of the Parousia. Later in the text, verse 51 says behold we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. Paul says that not all who were alive in his day would die before the Parousia occurred. Would Jackson say that some first century disciples are yet alive? 1 Corinthians 15:51 teaches the same time element as Matthew 24:3, 34, that the Parousia would occur within the first century generation.

### **1 Thessalonians 2:19**

1 Thessalonians 2:19 speaks of the Parousia. However, the Parousia in this text is related to the context which includes verses 14-16. There Paul witnesses to Jesus' charge of murder against the Jewish nation in Matthew 23:34. He lays the murders of the Lord and those sent to the Jews at the nations' feet.

"For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost." (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16).

As Jesus told the Jews to “fill up the measure of their father’s guilt,” that is, to fill up their cup of iniquity in murdering the prophets, Paul says they were in the very process of doing so. The result would be wrath upon them to the uttermost. We have seen that Jesus connected his Parousia and coming (Matthew 23:36-38; 24:3, 27, 30, 34) with the destruction of Jerusalem and their temple, in A.D. 70, within the first century generation. Here the context is the same, thus the Parousia of verse 19 refers to the time that wrath comes upon the Jews to the uttermost.

### **1 Thessalonians 3:13**

1 Thessalonians 3:13 is a direct quotation of an Old Testament prophecy, Zechariah 14:5, a passage which speaks of the “day of the Lord” in which God would gather all nations to battle against Jerusalem. See Zechariah 14:1-5. We can reduce this text to a simple syllogism.

The coming of the Lord with his saints in Zechariah 14:5 is Old Testament prophecy.

All things written (O.T. prophecy) were fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, within the first century generation. (Luke 21:20-22, 32) Therefore, Zechariah 14:5, i.e. the coming of the Lord with His saints was fulfilled when all things written were fulfilled in Jerusalem’s destruction.

Remember that Jesus taught that not one jot or tittle would in any wise pass from the law, i.e. Old Covenant until all were fulfilled. (Matt. 5:18) Thus to argue for the future fulfillment of Zechariah 14:5 is to argue that the law of Moses is in yet in effect.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:15**

We have another clear time statement in this passage which shows that Paul placed its fulfillment within the lifetime of those living in the first century generation. “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. See also verse 17. In both passages Paul says “we who are alive and remain” until the coming of the Lord.

What does it mean to be alive and remain until the coming of the Lord? It means that they would not die until Christ returned. Jesus speaking of John the Apostle said, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?” (John 21:22) These words were spoken to Peter who inquired about John’s fate after learning of his own. Jesus said John would remain alive until he returned. Some thought John would never die, (v. 23). That is not what Jesus said. He said only that he would remain alive until Christ came the second time.

Paul writing to the Corinthians spoke the five hundred brethren who saw Christ after his resurrection. He said that the greater part *remained* to the present, but *some* have fallen asleep. (15:6) To *remain* means to remain alive in contrast to fall asleep or die. Therefore, some of the Thessalonians would remain alive, and not fall asleep, i.e. not die until Christ's Parousia occurred.

These were the same words Jesus taught in his personal ministry, Matthew 16:27, 28, Matthew 24:34, 26:64. This is why Paul says, "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:23**

Paul's prayer was that the Thessalonians be preserved from both physical and mental harm. They were being severely persecuted. "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (5:23)

Paul had already taught that some would be alive. He prays that God would spare them from "bearing the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ" in their bodies, in other words, that they would not come to bodily, mental or spiritual harm but be delivered when Christ came. It is another text which teaches that some would be alive and not suffer death until Jesus returned.

### **2 Thessalonians 2:1-8**

Some in Thessalonica had come to believe that Christ's Parousia had already arrived. "Now brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as through the day of Christ had come." (2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2)

Some translations render "histemi" as "at hand," making the text read "as though the day of Christ is not "at hand." Expositors as Jim McGuiggan and others used this faulty translation to conclude that the day of Christ was not at hand. (See the McGuiggan-King Debate)

The word here is not "engus" the word normally translated at hand. It is the word "histemi" which means present, already has arrived or is set in, meaning has come or occurred. This word is used in Romans 8:38; 1 Cor. 3:22, 7:26; Gal. 1:4 and Heb. 9:9. In each case it is translated "present" to speak of that which is already a fact. Thus, Paul denied that the Parousia was present in approximately 51 A.D. when he wrote First Thessalonians.

However, to say that it had not yet occurred did not negate the fact that it was imminent. In fact, Paul goes on to establish the imminence of that coming once he corrected their error in believing it was present.

He gives two signs of the Parousia which had to be fulfilled before it could occur. One was the falling away or the great apostasy. The latter sign was the revealing of the man of sin or the antichrist. (v. 3) These two signs prove that there *were* signs of the Parousia or final return of Christ. See Don Preston's excellent brief exposition "This Matter of Signs." You may contact Don at [www.eschatology.org](http://www.eschatology.org)

Some have argued that Christ's coming at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was preceded by signs but his final return and Parousia is not. As the saying goes, that which proves too much proves nothing. We must either see 2 Thessalonians as the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 as it mentions signs, or we must remove it from the catalogue of coming again passages. Either way, it could not refer to a yet future return of Christ.

Next, Jesus predicted that the love of many would wax cold during the times leading up to Jerusalem's destruction. (Matt. 24:12) Thus the "great apostasy" belongs to the time of the fall of Jerusalem within the first century generation.

The writer of Hebrews speaking of the "gathering together to Christ" admonished the church not to forsake that gathering together as the manner of some is, but to exhort one another as they saw the day of Christ approaching. (Hebrews 10:25).

The day was same "day of Christ" mentioned in 2 Thess. 2:2. Only Hebrews was written later, by some 13 or so years. Thus, the Parousia had drawn nearer as the great apostasy was at that time presently in progress. The day was close enough for them to "see" its approach by the present apostasy which had not yet occurred at the time Second Thessalonians was written. In fact the Hebrews' writer says that "**in a very little while**" the Parousia would occur. "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry." (Hebrews 10:37)

However, John writing of both the apostasy and the "man of sin" or the antichrist, says that the apostasy has occurred as a past event and the antichrist had been revealed. "Little children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us." (1 John 2:18, 19)

John says that the antichrist (man of sin) had come signaling that they were in the final hour. John writes a very short time before Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70. He says that the great apostasy has now occurred for "they went out from us." They could not go out from John and the church if they were never in with them. This confirms the apostasy.

Paul, writing in 51 or 52 A.D. said, the "mystery of iniquity was already at work, that the man of sin sat in the temple of God showing himself that he was God, (2 Thess. 2:6-7), yet he was unrevealed at the time. By way of contrast, John says he has been revealed. Thus, they saw these events in their day, as the sign that the last hour was near, and the time was imminent for Christ to return. See our article "The Falling Away" at [www.allthingsfulfilled.com](http://www.allthingsfulfilled.com) .

## **2 Peter 3:4**

Second Peter 3:4, 12 is a reference to the Parousia. Jackson believes it is yet future. However, the scoffers are asking, "where is the Promise of his coming? They believe that Jesus and the apostles were mistaken when they taught that it would happen within that first century generation, (Matthew 24:30, 34).

Peter writes his second epistle to remind his readers of what he wrote in the first epistle. He said, "Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder). (v.1) We remind people by either explicitly and/or implicitly saying the same thing to them we've said before.

What had Peter taught in his first epistle regarding the Parousia? According to chapter one, he taught that the salvation was ready to be revealed in the last time (1:5). Next he says his readers were receiving the end or maturation of the salvation of their souls. (1:9)

The prophets had inquired about that salvation wanting to know the very time and what manner of time which was indicated in their own prophecies. Peter says that to them it was revealed that not to themselves, i.e. not to the prophets, but to "us" meaning to Peter and his audience as the recipients of the blessings. (1:10-12)

Specifically what did the prophets prophesy about? They spoke concerning the "sufferings of Christ" and the glories that would follow. The sufferings refer to Christ's death, the glories to the events attendant upon his return. Peter says all these things were not for the prophets' day, but were for Peter and his readers' day, in those last times.

Not only do we have the prophets telling us that time was a factor in the coming again passages, definite time, not symbolic time as “prophet” Jackson believes. They clearly search for what [time] and what manner of *time*.

The prophets saw that Jesus’ death would be in the first century generation, i.e. in the last days of Israel preceding her fall, Daniel 9:24-27. Jesus taught that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected of this [first century] generation. (Luke 17:25). He also taught that in that same generation he would return in the glory of His Father. (Matthew 16:27, 28; 24:30, 34). They only saw one generation for both the suffering and the glory.

Several chapters over Peter writes saying that the end of all things was “at hand” and that the time of the judgment had come. “They will give account to Him who is ready [“mello,” about to] judge the living and the dead. (4:5) “But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.” (4:7) For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? (4:17)

Peter therefore taught that the suffering, the glories of Christ, the resurrection, end of all things and the time of the judgment had come in their generation. It is a given that resurrection, judgment, and the coming of the everlasting kingdom are concurrent, (2 Timothy 4:1) with the end of the world. Thus, Peter’s teaching in 2 Peter 3:4, 12 harmonizes with that time and event. It is a reminder of what he taught in the first epistle.

Paul speaks of the elements of the world as referring to the “law of Moses” from which Jesus came to deliver the Jews. “Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Gal. 4:3-5)

Later he admonished the Gentiles who had turned from idols not to turn again to the weak and beggarly elements of the law wherein they desired to be in bondage. (Gal. 4:9). See other texts where elements refer to the law of Moses. (Col. 2:8, 20; Heb. 5:12; 6:1) This is the meaning of the term as used in 2 Peter 3:10, 12. The fire is the symbol of the destruction of the Jews as John taught in Matthew 3:10-12.

Lastly, Peter quotes from Deuteronomy 32, which is the Old Covenant Law, saying, “Is this not laid up in store with Me, Sealed among my treasures? (32:34) The word “preserved” in 2 Peter 3:7 is the same word translated “laid up in store” in Deuteronomy 32:34. Further, when these events would come to pass, God says, “For the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things to come hasten upon them. This is consistent with Peter’s statements that the end of all

things was at hand (1 Peter 4:7) and that the day was “hastening” upon them, (3:12; 2:3).

Deuteronomy is part of the law. Second Peter teaching on the end of the world is a quotation from Deuteronomy. Therefore Second Peter three is the fulfillment of the law.

The law would not pass till all was fulfilled. Matthew 5:18. 2 Peter 3:4, 7, 12 are prophecies of the law. Therefore, the law would not pass till 2 Peter 3:4, 7, 12 are fulfilled.

The law and all things written (i.e. yet unfulfilled) were fulfilled in A.D. 70, Luke 21:20-22) when Jerusalem fell. 2 Peter 3:4-12 is a prophecy of the law. Therefore, Second Peter 3:4-12 was fulfilled in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem fell to the Romans, within the first century generation.

### **James 5:7-8**

You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” (James 5:8) While many in the Amillennial camp believe that “at hand” here is not a reference to time, not all agree. Franklin Camp’s *“Work of the Holy Spirit in Redemption”* applies this passage to A.D. 70. Thus Amillennialists are divided.

Secondly, as we have said, if to be “at hand,” means certain to occur, without respect to time, then what would not at hand mean? Would it not mean to not be at hand, i.e. to not be certain to occur? Hold on a moment. Why not stretch the opposite to its logical conclusion? If at hand means “certain to occur without respect to time, why would “not at hand” not mean *not certain to occur with reference to time*? Isn’t that the logical opposite? That would mean that at hand means imminent time when it is not certain to occur, but when it is certain to occur it does not mean imminent time! Such is the logic of detractors.

James says this coming was imminent for the judge was standing at the door. That is the precise language used by Jesus to speak of the Parousia which would be at hand or near before the first century generation passed away, Matthew 24:32-34.

The judgment is in view of those who had heaped up treasure in the last days of Judaism, in retribution to those who had condemned and murdered the just. “You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you. (James 5:3-6) We have already identified the murderers of Jesus and his saints as the Jews, (Matthew 23:32-36; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). He would come to punish them, bringing wrath and retribution at His Parousia. James is therefore in harmony with all other passages on Christ’s return in the first century.

## **1 John 2:28**

This brings us to 1 John 2:28. Jackson attempts to use this as a yet future coming text to argue that the Parousia has not yet occurred. Once again, we have the context of this passage as an imminent hour in the first century. 1 John 2:17 says that the world is passing away, speaking of that Jewish age confirming the words of Christ in Matthew 24:3, 29. Verses 18-19 show that the antichrist and the great apostasy which would precede the return of Christ had already occurred. These events signaled that the last hour had come.

Next, John encourages the saints to have confidence before Christ at his Parousia. Why would one not see those events as connected, related and contextually joined together? There is no reason whatsoever to rip verse 28 from the context of 1 John 2:17-19.

In summary, we have examined every text Jackson uses for the Parousia argument both individually and collectively and demonstrated that none can be separated from the first century time frame of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. All arguments Jackson makes to discredit the time are signally refuted. He does not prove his case. Thus, the final return of Christ occurred within that first century generation in connection with Jerusalem's fall in A.D. 70.