


# PAROUSIA SETTINGS

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This study deals with the run-up to the event our Lord Himself named as His “Parousia” and the treatment is framed within other OT & NT classical contexts.

The prime references for our Lord’s teaching are Matthew 24 and Mark 13. The night visions of Daniel and his “Seventy Weeks” teaching together with the lead in to the Gog Magog engagement of Ezekiel 38 are dealt with and the umbrella sequences of the Apocalyptic Heptad (70<sup>th</sup> week) which follow the Parousia are then examined.

## CONTENTS

### 1. PREFACE

Christians differ widely on their views as to the return of Christ. Some name the “Parousia” the “Rapture” quite legitimately and explain that it (or the Lord’s return simply) is the next big event on the horizon of God’s covenant relationship with the church or as others would have it of His dispensational dealing with mankind.

There is the matter of the “secret rapture” to which many believers have an aversion. I do not see the Parousia as secret at all. It may be in the same category as the Lord’s appearance to Saul of Tarsus where his companions knew something of a divine order had taken place but they were not fully integrated into the experience.

Let us go immediately to Matthew 24.30 & 25.31. In the first of these references our Lord speaks to the topic of “the coming(Parousia) of the Son of Man” which is described as “a sign or signal in heaven” and is visible and is “with great power and glory” and accompanies the trumpet call(the last trump of departure). Characterised by “great power and glory” and promoting mourning among all peoples of the earth it relates specifically to *the gathering of the elect*.

The second context is in Matthew 25.30 and relates to the coming of the Son of Man in His glory and all the angels with Him. On that occasion He will sit on his glorious throne (on earth) and “*all nations will be gathered*” before Him. On this occasion as Zechariah(12.10-14) says Israel specifically will mourn and repent. The sequel is the “judgment of nations”(Mt.25.31-46).

This judgment is followed by age-long life for those on the Lord's right hand. The blessed from this event share in the kingdom of our Lord. The manner in which the fabulous rule of saints over the earth takes hold is not described in the context for these passages only describe the elect as joining in the Parousia.

## 2. THE LORD'S DISCIPLESHIP TEACHING

What Jesus taught his disciples concerning the Parousia Matthew records in his 4<sup>th</sup> discourse. The teaching refers to the nature and aftermath of the event and then to 5 signs of its coming.

The Lord tells us (1) That it will follow the course of the sun in its sweep from east to west but will occur at the speed of lightning. For this reason it will not be unseen any more than lightning is unseen but it will be "in the twinkling of an eye" so it will scarcely be describable nor will it be traceable by film.

(2) Second it will be accompanied or immediately followed by a rare gathering of international aerial surveillance whether to begin a re-organisation of the world or to inspect the havoc of simultaneous ravages of war. Our Lord then gives us the full context: (i) Tribulation (ii) Daytime darkness (iii) Night time moonless night (iv) the star fall (v) the shaking of heavenly bodies (probably the planets of our system). He emphasises

(3) that the precise day and hour will remain unknown until the event itself and tells us:-

(4) that life will be proceeding along routine lines as in the days of Noah with eating drinking and marriages planned up till the very day itself.

(5) The Lord explains that it will be like a "thief in the night" even for a world ecumenical leader (The "master of the house") and many so called (wicked) servants of the master who disown his soon coming will share the gnashing of teeth and not the bridal supper.

Now let us view the Lord's doctrine for disciples from the perspective of Peter who informs Mark along the lines of what we find in Mark 13.8-31.

The Lord has been asked about the event of the fall of Jerusalem but he proceeds to outline events far into the future beginning with (1) the continuous inhumanity of warfare-*polymathy* as we call it.

(2) He proceeds to what we would call *revolution*-the internecine struggle of nations which we call revolution. The French Revolution spelt the beginning of such strife in modern time and today we have what is called the “Arab Spring” which has seen perhaps up to 10 nations in such turmoil.

(3)The other earthly signs include *Earthquakes* and famines in “classic” places. These “earthly signs” are the birth pangs that precede the Parousia.

(4) “The gospel must be preached to all nations” is the imperative we can begin to see happening before our eyes nowadays and this is the 4<sup>th</sup> sign.

(5) The world-wide hatred of Jews/Christians is the fifth sign. Then a most interesting statement occurs.

(6) Jesus said Tribulation would ensue. This would be of such a sort as to be unequalled since the beginning of creation. Jesus bade his servants pray that their flight would not be in winter because He knew that great austerity and need such as had never been known would accompany this era of the “abomination that makes desolate”. He promised the days would be shortened. I understand this to have a bearing on the elect of God who will be protected by the “rapture” from the angst on earth. The days may indeed become literally shorter by a new terrestrial speed or positioning to counteract loss of life on earth but the Heptad will run its course. I think the *The horns of the beast would be cut* by the Master’s Parousia. Thus the seven years of the Heptad of growing distress and *great tribulation* would be cut out for the Lord’s people. Jesus then said *He had told “everything” ahead of time.*

(7) After the earthly distress (“that tribulation”) of the first half of the Heptad there would come the “heavenly signs”. The Lord did not refer to Peter James and John and Andrew who were listening as to *seeing with desire the coming of the Son of Man amid the clouds of saints* (which would include the disciples) but they would be involved from the heavenly side. The “Then “ of *the ingathering of the elect* seems to be damasked to the tribulation but I believe there are two added facts that Christ set out as appendices. He said “Also (then) they will see the Son coming with great power and glory and He will send His angels and He will gather his elect to heaven.” The Greek term *τοτε* is probably better rendered “formerly” to connect it to the event of the “shortening of time.” Peter speaks in the “third person” of the shortening of the days- i.e. he

reports it as God's purpose which must have been part of the "all things" that the Lord explained.

### 3. PAULINE CHURCH DOCTRINE

### 4. JOHN'S SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

### 5. DANIEL'S NIGHT VISION

### 6. EZEKIEL'S ELIMINATING STRUGGLES

The approach to the next military crisis in the Middle East has to be viewed in stages. First there appears to be an event that is the trigger and first step in a series of *three expanding circles of military involvement*.

The initial manoeuvre both warrants and necessitates a massive diplomatic effort and disengagement. This peace initiative will not hold good because scripture forecasts the outbreak of what a sudden wider theatre war involving *Russia Iran and Israel*.

The stunning defeat of Russia is not without solemn effect in Europe America Russia and Egypt. There will be a nuclear exchange and mass disruption accompanied by "darkness" that is known as *nuclear night*.

The defeat of Russia and her allies brings *China into a strategic and possibly non-nuclear attempt to dominate the world* and gain mastery of the middle east but just as forces pitted against Israel re-group and position themselves at ancient Megiddo the interposition of the Lord Himself renders this ultimate conflict of the three and one half year era of distress the shortest world war in history.

We now know the facts are quite different to those Golda Mair imagined when she said "Why when Israel has none were Israel's enemies given oil?" Israel's massive oil and gas reserves inland (not to speak of offshore fields) now beginning to be explored and extracted constitute volumes on a par with or even surpassing those of Saudi Arabia and constitute a prize for her adversaries.

The extrapolation I have given may seem utterly maverick and speculative to the reader and on that account it is essential to flesh out the account with detail from Ezekiel and the Apocalypse.

### **(a) Israel in the latter days**

Israel according to strategic specialists is now the fourth strongest military power on earth. She ranks after America, Russia and China as No.4.

- i. Ezekiel pictures Israel in the far distant latter days as “a land recovered from war”(Ezekiel 38.8). What does that mean? The “Pulal passive” simply means that Israel has been at war and that assumes both her latter day statehood and subsequent defence of her land as occurred in 1948 and 1967.
- ii. It also assumes a very considerable “come-back” or return to stability and full recovery of the land itself from a war footing. The land is further described as “quibbutzed” From many nations. This was exactly the state of Israel in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and the fact that Jews from all over the world now live in Israel as quibbutzniks and in Moshad settlements is testimony to these days as the exact period.
- iii. The *hillside settlements* of today in Israel are evidence of the wider development of the land and its water and utility systems.
- iv. The *total security* of Israel is now ensured by the “Iron shield” as it is called.
- v. In Ez.38.11 Israel is described not as a land of great cities but of “villages” (much as in the time of the Perizzites)
- vi. The people of Israel are seen to live un-harassed lives linked to overall security which we now recognise as are provided by air cover and communications unknown in Ezekiel’s day
- vii. Hence the villages have no walls and no mighty gates and iron bars of security.
- viii. The people are described as living on the “summit” or highest and best of the land. They are described as rich in what they have acquired by possession and exploration and what they have created( qanah and qinyan)

### **(b) Iran in the latter days**

### **(c) Russia in the latter days**

i Ezekiel speaks of Russia after great days in the latter or sunset years of the common era “visiting”(dkp) or “*punishing*” Israel. This assumes that Russia has a score to settle and that would appear to be a pre-emptive act of war on Israel’s part.

### **(d) Saudi Arabia and emirates**

A diplomatic initiative of the Saudis is

## **7. CONCLUSION**

