

## Topic: Second Coming of Jesus

### English search terms:

- Looking at Bible dictionary articles for scripture passages rather than language search terms.

### Original language search terms:

- *parousia* (24 times in NT text). All of these are included in the scriptures below from Bible dictionary articles.

### Scriptures from Bible dictionary articles:

- |                             |                             |                           |                              |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| • <i>Job</i> 19:25, 26      | • <i>Luke</i> 9:26, 27;     | • <i>2 Corinthians</i>    | • <i>Hebrews</i> 6:5         |
| • <i>Ps.</i> 50:3, 4        | 12:36-40;                   | 5:10                      | ("age to come");             |
| • <i>Is.</i> 2:2, 4; 9:6-7; | 13:28-29;                   | • <i>Philippians</i> 1:6; | 9:28                         |
| 11:6; 24:23; 35:1;          | 17:22-37; 18:8;             | 3:20, 21; 4:5             | • <i>James</i> 5:7-9         |
| 52:3ff.                     | 19:12, 13, 15;              | • <i>Colossians</i> 3:4   | • <i>1 Peter</i> 1:5, 7, 13; |
| • <i>Dan.</i> 7:13-14, 27;  | 21:5-36; 22:29-30           | • <i>1 Thessalonians</i>  | 4:7, 13; 5:4                 |
| 9                           | • <i>John</i> 5:22; 14:3,   | 1:10; 2:19; 3:13;         | • <i>2 Peter</i> 3:3, 4,     |
| • <i>Zech.</i> 13:1         | 18, 19, 21, 23, 28,         | 4:15-17; 5:2, 3,          | 8-14                         |
| • <i>Matthew</i> 6:10;      | 29; 17:24; 21:23            | 23;                       | • <i>1 John</i> 2:28; 3:2;   |
| 13:24-30, 36-43;            | • <i>Acts</i> 1:10-11;      | • <i>2 Thessalonians</i>  | 4:17                         |
| 16:27, 28; 19:28;           | 3:19-21                     | 1:7-10; 2:1-3, 5,         | • <i>Jude</i> 22, 24         |
| 23:39; 24:1-51;             | • <i>Romans</i> 8:19ff.;    | 8, 9                      | • <i>Revelation</i> 1:7;     |
| 25:1-13, 19,                | 13:12; 14:10                | • <i>1 Timothy</i> 6:14,  | 3:3, 11; 5:10;               |
| 31-46; 26:64;               | • <i>1 Corinthians</i> 1:7, | 15                        | 11:15; 14:1(?),              |
| • <i>Mark</i> 8:38; 9:1;    | 8; 3:11-15; 4:5;            | • <i>2 Timothy</i> 2:12;  | 14-16(?); 16:15;             |
| 13:1-37; 14:62              | 11:26; 15:23-26;            | 4:1, 8, 18                | 19:11-22:5, 7,               |
|                             | 16:22                       | • <i>Titus</i> 2:13       | 10-13, 20                    |

### Scripture study:

- The "last days," "end of the age," "the regeneration," "the end," "the kingdom of God," "the day of Christ," "day of the Lord," "age to come," "restoration of all things," "salvation," "revelation of Jesus," "end of all things," is coming. *Is.* 2:2; *Matt.* 13:39-40; 19:28; 24:3, 14; *Mark* 9:1; *Luke* 13:25-30; 19:11; 21:31; *Acts* 3:21; *Phil.* 1:6; *1 Th.* 5:2, 23; *2 Th.* 2:2; *Heb.* 6:5; 9:28; *1 Pet.* 1:5, 7, 13; 4:7
- **Jesus will return to earth**
  - His return, and the events therein, constitute "Day of the Lord." *Matt.* 23:39; 24:3, 30, 36; *John* 14:18-19; 21:23; *Acts* 1:10-11; *1 Cor.* 11:26; *Phil.* 3:20; *1 Th.* 1:10; 3:13; 5:23; *2 Th.* 2:1; *1 Tim.* 6:14-15; *Titus* 2:13; *Heb.* 9:28; *1 Pet.* 1:5, 7, 13; 4:13; 5:4; *Rev.* 19:11-16
  - Coming of the Son of Man; Jesus is the Son of Man. *Dan.* 7:13-14; *Matt.* 16:27-28; 24:30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:64 *Mark* 8:38; 13:26; 14:62; *Luke* 9:26; 12:40; 17:22-23, 26, 30; 18:8; 21:27; *Rev.* 1:5-7
- **Jesus' return will be cataclysmic**

- Global difficulty will precede Jesus' return to earth. Matt. 24:4-13, 17-21, 29; Mark 13:7-8, 19-20, 24-25; Luke 21:9-10, 25-26; 2 Pet. 3:3-4
- Persecution of Jesus' followers will precede his return to earth. Matt. 24:9; Mark 13:9, 11-13; Luke 21:12-19
- Deception and false prophets will precede Jesus' return to earth. Matt. 24:4, 11, 23-26; Mark 13:6, 21-23; Luke 17:23; 21:8; 2 Th. 2:10-12; 2 Pet. 3:3-4
- The "man of lawlessness" will precede Jesus' return. 2 Th. 2:3-4, 6, 8-9
- Apostasy will precede Jesus' return. 2 Th. 2:3
- Everyone will see him return. Matt. 24:27, 29-31; Luke 17:24; 21:25-28; Act 1:10-11; 2 Thess. 1:7; Rev. 1:7
- God will destroy evil upon Jesus' return. 2 Th. 2:8
- God will destroy the present heavens and earth after Jesus' return. 2 Pet. 3:7, 10-13
- **Judgment**
  - God will judge the earth and all the people in it. Ps. 50:3-4; Is. 2:4; 11:1-5; Matt. 13:29, 40-42; 16:27; Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 4:5; James 5:9; 1 John 4:17; Rev. 20:11-15; 22:12
  - Jesus is the judge. Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:22; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Rev. 19:11, 15
  - How people respond to Jesus determines whether they are in or out of the kingdom in the end. Mark 8:38; 9:1; Luke 9:26; 13:24-30; 17:29; 19:27
    - Those who belong to God, who follow Jesus, will participate in God's rule, his kingdom, eternal life, and dwell with him. Matt. 19:28; 24:31, 47; 25:34-40, 46; Mark 13:26-27; Luke 22:28-30; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10; 20:4, 6; 22:3
    - Care for the hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick, and prisoners figures into how Jesus judges at the end. Matt. 25:31-46
- **After the end**
  - God will clearly and uncontestedly rule all of creation in the end. Job 19:25-26; Is. 2:2; 9:6-7; 11:1-5; 24:23; Dan. 7:13-14, 27; 1 Cor. 15:24; Rev. 11:15; 19:15-16; 20:11
  - God's final rule will be characterized by peace. Is. 2:4; Is. 9:6-7; 11:6
  - God's final rule will be characterized by justice. Is. 9:7; 11:3-5
  - God's final rule will be characterized by righteousness. Is. 9:7; 11:4-5; Matt. 13:43; Rev. 22:3
  - Jesus' return will bring a new heavens and earth and God dwelling with humanity on earth. 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-5, 9-27; 22:1-5
  - Jesus' return is a source of reward to his followers. 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4
  - Upon Jesus' return to earth, his previously deceased followers will be raised from the dead & transformed into Christ's likeness. 1 Cor. 15:22-26; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:4; 1 Th. 4:15-17
  - Jesus' return begins the time when his followers will live with Him forever. John. 17:24; 1 Th. 4:17; 5:10; 2 Th. 2:1; Heb. 9:28
  - Jesus' followers are a source of glory to him at his return. 2 Th. 1:10
  - Judgment of the wicked results in separation from God. Matt. 24:51; 25:12-13, 30, 41, 46; 2 Th. 1:8-9; Rev. 19:19-21; 20:15; 21:8, 27

- **Jesus' followers: Now until the end**

- **At the present God's kingdom rule is not yet fully here.** Matt. 6:10; 13:29; Luke 17:20-21; 19:11

- **What is Jesus doing?**

- Jesus is currently with the Father. John 14:28
- Jesus is preparing a place for his followers where they can be with him. John 14:3
- Jesus' followers' "native" home is heaven, from where Jesus will return. Phil. 3:20.
- Jesus will not leave his followers as orphans. John. 14:18

- **Time**

- No one knows when Jesus will return and the end will come. Matt. 24:36, 44, 50; 25:13; Mark 13:32; Luke 12:40, 46; 17:26-31; 1 Th. 5:2-3; 1 Tim. 6:15; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15
- The gospel will be preached in the whole world prior to the end. Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10
- Jesus' return is near. Rom. 13:12; Phil. 4:5; James 5:8, 9; 1 Pet. 4:7; 2 Pet. 3:8-9, 15 (God's perspective of time is different than ours, his patience is salvation); Rev. 3:11; 22:7, 10, 12, 20
- God will sustain his people all the way to Jesus' return. 1 Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:6; 1 Th. 3:13; 5:9, 23; 2 Th. 1:11; 2 Tim. 4:18; 1 Pet. 1:5; Jude 1:24
- Patient faithfulness in waiting for Jesus' return is required of his followers. Matt. 24:45-51; 25:14ff; Luke 9:26; 19:12-26; 1 Tim. 6:14-15; James 5:7-9

- **Future hope**

- All of creation longs for the time when Jesus will return and reveal God's sons, complete redemption. Rom. 8:18-25; 2 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 9:28
- We eagerly, longingly await Jesus' return. Rom. 8:24-25; 1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28
- Remembering Jesus' return is a source of comfort to his followers. 1 Th. 4:18; 5:11; James 5:8; 1 Pet. 4:12-13
- Jesus rescues his followers from God's wrath at the end of the ages. 1 Th. 1:10; Heb. 9:28
- Jesus' coming is an occasion for joy and hope. Matt. 25:21, 23; Luke 21:28; 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Th. 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:6-9; 4:12-13
- We remember and celebrate Jesus' death until he returns. 1 Cor. 11:26
- We pray for Jesus' return. 1 Cor. 16:22; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 22:20

- **Alertness**

- Awareness of, alertness and preparation for Jesus' return is required of his followers. Matt. 24:42-25:13; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 12:35-48; 1 Th. 5:2-10; 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:7; Rev. 16:15
- Jesus expects us to recognize signs of the nearness of his return. Mark 13:28-29; Luke 21:25, 29-31

- **Endurance**

- Endurance to the end is required of Jesus' followers. Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:19; 2 Tim. 2:12; James 5:7-11; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12-13; Rev. 3:11; 16:15; 21:7-8

- Abide in Jesus and his love while we wait for his return; this alleviates fear of judgment. 1 John 2:28; 4:16-17; Jude 22

### **Secondary sources:**

- **Eerdman's Dictionary; "Parousia."**

"A Greek noun, used of persons or things, meaning "arrival" or active "presence" (from the verb *paéreimi*, "to be present")... Pre-Christian Jewish tradition uses the image of God's "coming" to mark specific moments God has chosen to judge humanity, or events which reveal God's powerful presence and purpose. Such tradition sees God's presence in concrete terms like "the day," "the time," or "the year" of the Lord, or through graphic images such as the ark of the covenant, the meeting tent, the holy place, the cloud, the Spirit, the Hand, or the Word of God... Israel's growing sense of God's regal stature, however, demanded worldwide submission to God's rule, and the notion of direct, definitive divine appearances gave way to those agents deemed divinely chosen to wield such authority in the world. The later decline of Jewish kingship provoked deep disputes over the authority of the priestly cultus to express God's will. In this vacuum, prophetic, otherworldly, elliptical, apocalyptic visions of God's final self-manifestation flourished... Parousia enters early Christian usage from several directions. But the main vector is Paul, who joins older, traditional Jewish terminology with Hellenistic notions about the visit of a ruling personage (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19). The resulting blend envisions an imminent, future "coming" of Jesus with cataclysmic, global finality. Paul's fusion of judicial with covenantal imagery, combined with a temporal ambiguity in his views about the end of the world, produces conflicts that continue to challenge his modern interpreters. Although the Synoptic tradition clearly presumes Jesus' coming global assertion of God's authority over this world, the noun *parousiá* is entirely missing from Mark, from Q, and from Luke and Acts. The verb *paéreimi* does appear, but mainly in its common, secular sense. Mark and Q prefer standard Jewish expressions such as "the day of the Lord" for Jesus' imminent return in power as God's final messianic judge. By comparison, Matthew inserts *parousiá* into his source material, giving his own special connotation to this term by portraying the Risen Jesus as already present, but hidden, within his Church until the end of time (Matt. 24:27, 37, 39). In the post-Pauline Pastoral Letters *parousiá* yields to the still more abstract *epiphaéneia*, usage already presaged in 2 Thess. 2:8 (cf. Acts 2:20). This complements 2nd-century Christian trends away from historical, messianic thinking about Jesus in favor of more logocentric, timeless, universalized Christology. Modern biblical scholarship has seen much lively debate over the historical impact of Jesus' delayed parousia in changing Christianity from a fluid, charismatic movement to a more stable, institutionalized, worldly entity."

- **Holman dictionary, "Parousia."**

"Greek word which means "presence" or "coming." In NT theology it encompasses the events surrounding the second coming of Christ."

- **Holman dictionary "Day of the Lord."**

"Time when God reveals His sovereignty over human powers and human existence. The Day of the Lord rests on the Hebrew term, *yom*, "day," the fifth most frequent noun used in the OT and

one used with a variety of meanings: time of daylight from sunrise to sunset (Gen. 1:14; 3:8; 8:22; Amos 5:8); 24-hour period (Gen. 1:5); a general expression for “time” without specific limits (Gen. 2:4; Ps. 102:3; Isa. 7:17); the period of a specific event (Jer. 32:31; Ezek. 1:28). The “Day of the Lord” then does not give a precise time period. It may mean the daylight hours, the 24-hour day, or a general time period, perhaps characterized by a special event. Zechariah 14:7 even points to a time when all time is daylight, night with its darkness having vanished.

“Day of the Lord” does not in itself designate the time perspective of the event, whether it is past, present, or future. Lamentations 2:1 can speak of the “day of the Lord’s anger” in past tense, describing the fall of Jerusalem. Joel 1:15 could describe a present disaster as the “Day of the Lord.”

The OT prophets used a term familiar to their audience, a term by which the audience expected light and salvation (Amos 5:18), but the prophets painted it as a day of darkness and judgment (Isa. 2:10-22; 13:6,9; Joel 1:15; 2:1-11,31; 3:14-15; Amos 5:20; Zeph. 1:7-8,14-18; Mal. 4:5). The OT language of the Day of the Lord is thus aimed at warning sinners among God’s people of the danger of trusting in traditional religion without commitment to God and His way of life. It is language that could be aimed at judging Israel or that could be used to promise deliverance from evil enemies (Isa. 13:6,9; Ezek. 30:3; Obad. 15). The Day of the Lord is thus a point in time in which God displays His sovereign initiative to reveal His control of history, of time, of His people, and of all people.

New Testament writers took up the OT expression to point to Christ’s final victory and the final judgment of sinners. In so doing, they used several different expressions (HCSB): “day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6), “day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:8); “Day of the Lord” (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:2); “day of Christ” (Phil. 1:10; 2:16); “day of judgment” (1 John 4:17); “this day” (1 Thess. 5:4); “that day” (2 Tim. 1:12); “day of wrath” (Rom. 2:5).

People who take a dispensational perspective on Scripture often seek to interpret each of the terms differently, so that the “day of Christ” is a day of blessing equated with the rapture, whereas the day of God is an inclusive term for all the events of end time (2 Pet. 3:12). In this view the Day of the Lord includes the great tribulation, the following judgment on the nations, and the time of worldwide blessing under the rule of the Messiah.

Many Bible students who do not take a dispensational viewpoint interpret the several expressions in the NT to refer to one major event: the end time when Christ returns for the final judgment and establishes His eternal kingdom. Whichever interpretation one makes of specific details, the Day of the Lord points to the promise that God’s eternal sovereignty over all creation and all nations will one day become crystal clear to all creatures.”

• **Holman dictionary “Second Coming.”**

“(Matt. 24:26–25:46) Jesus spoke in veiled language about His coming. Unnatural occurrences in the heavens were commonly used in apocalyptic writings to describe the indescribable but also to screen deliberately from view those things meant to remain hidden. Much of God’s plans are mystery, but Jesus disclosed enough. The coming of the Son of Man will be entirely public and “at an hour you do not expect” (Matt. 24:44 HCSB). He will come in the clouds with great power (Acts 1:9-11). The sign of His Parousia is obscure in its meaning. The sermon is interrupted by the statement, “This generation will certainly not pass away until all these things take

place” (Matt. 24:34). Jesus was not confused or in error concerning these events. He referred to the destruction of Jerusalem that took place in that generation as a foretaste of the final coming. Concluding parables teach the necessity of remaining watchful. A description of final judgment ends the discourse. Its basic message is a call to be prepared when Jesus does return.”

• **Holman dictionary “future hope.”**

Future hope focuses upon the expectancy of the consummation of the individual’s salvation at the close of the age. With the ushering in of the eternal order at the return of Christ, the believer’s hope becomes experienced reality rather than anticipation of future experience (Rom. 8:24-25). This eschatological orientation of NT future hope grows out of the OT prophetic anticipation of God’s future deliverance (Isa. 25:9; see especially Paul’s use of Isa. 11:10 in Rom. 15:12). In the Hebrew OT several terms are used to convey the idea of hope: *qawah* (to be stretched out towards, to long after, wait for [with God as object 26 times]), *yachal* (to wait, long [for God, 27 times]), *chakah* (to wait [for God, 7 times]), *sabar* (to wait, hope [for God, 4 times]). The corresponding nouns are not commonly used; only nine times in reference to hope in God. Of the 146 uses of these verbs or nouns, only half have the thrust to spiritual reality rather than a nonreligious meaning. In these 73 religious uses the concept of hope is closely related to trust. God is the ground and frequent object of hope; “to hope in Yahweh,” “to wait for Yahweh” are common expressions. Implicit to hoping in God is submission to His sovereign rule. Consequently, hope and fear of God are often expressed together (Pss. 33:18-20; 147:11; Prov. 23:17-18). To hope in God is to stand in awe of Him and His power with the confidence that God will faithfully perform His word. Thus hope becomes trust in the righteous character of Yahweh. In the interbiblical period the eschatological thrust of hope became prominent but also confusing with its differing expectations. This future hope was often directed toward the expectation of the Messiah and the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. With the emergence of numerous individuals making messianic claims, arousing the expectations of the people, but then collapsing into defeat and destruction, the future hope of Israel took on a pessimistic tone especially in rabbinical thought. Not before Israel achieved complete obedience to the law could God’s kingdom be established.

This national uncertainty tended to create a personal uncertainty about what constitutes the required obedience for pleasing God, thus ensuring the resurrection of the body and inclusion in that coming messianic kingdom. In contrast to this pessimistic view, one finds in Qumran a confident eschatological hope. However, this hope was only possible for the select few who were the elect of God. In Hellenistic Judaism, future hope was submerged into the Greek concept of the immortality of the soul, as Philo’s writings illustrate.

The writers in the NT express the concept of future hope primarily by the Greek word *elpis* and its cognates.

The use of hope in reference to the return of Christ is seen in Matt. 24:50 (also Luke 12:46) and in 2 Pet. 3:12-14. In Jesus’ teaching on watchfulness, failure to be expecting the return of the Son of man can cause disaster. In 2 Peter this expectation of the day of the Lord stands as the incentive to holy living. In both passages the element of uncertainty often associated with the Greek word has disappeared and is replaced with the sense of confidence based upon the promise of the Lord to come again.

The objects of the various Greek words relating to future hope provide insight into what constitutes this hope. Most basic is the expectancy of the return of Christ, described as the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:7) and as the coming of the day of God (*parousia*; 2 Pet. 3:12), or just simply as hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 1:3; cp. Luke 12:36; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 9:28). This expectancy constitutes a blessed hope and is defined as the manifestation of the glory of our great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13; cp. Rom. 5:2; Col. 1:27). Accompanying this manifestation of Christ is the expectancy of a new heaven and a new earth (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1); the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked (Acts 24:15); the revelation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19); our adoption as sons which is defined as the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23); the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for life eternal (Jude 21); God's grace (1 Pet. 1:13). As Abraham awaited the Holy City, so the believer looks forward to it (Heb. 11:10). The hope of Israel in the promise of God is realized in the Christian hope of resurrection (Acts 26:6-8). These constitute the hope of life eternal long promised beforehand (Titus 1:2; 3:7), of salvation (1 Thess. 5:8) and of righteousness (Gal. 5:5).

The basis of this hope lies in God. In Him who is the Savior of all mankind one puts hope (1 Tim. 4:10; 5:5; Rom. 15:12; 1 Pet. 1:21), rather than in uncertain riches (1 Tim. 6:17); in His name is hope placed (Matt. 12:21), or in Christ (1 Cor. 15:19). This hope is linked closely to the gospel (Col. 1:23), to our calling into God's grace (Eph. 1:18; 4:4) and to faith and the presence of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:5). It is a dynamically living hope (1 Pet. 1:3) which motivates one to holy and righteous living (2 Pet. 3:14). As such it stands as a member of the Christian triad of faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 13:13; 1 Thess. 1:3; Col. 1:4-5).

- **Holman dictionary “eschatology.”**

The object of the information given in the Bible concerning eschatology seems to be not so much to provide every detail but rather to create hope and anticipation as the church looks for “the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

- **ABD “Parousia.”**

“The Greek word *parousia* used in the NT to speak of the arrival (2 Cor 7:6f; Phil 1:26) or presence of someone (2 Cor 10:10). It is also used as a technical term to speak of the arrival or presence of Christ in glory at a particular point in the eschatological process (e.g., Matt 24:3). The belief in the Parousia or presence of Christ in glory is firmly rooted in all strands of the NT, though the expectation can be referred to apart from the word (Rev 19:11ff; 1 Cor 15:23ff; Mark 13:26; 14:62) or by use of other terms (e.g., *apokalypsis* in 1 Cor 1:7; 1 Pet 1:7). Even in those books where the person of Christ does not loom large (like the letter of James), the Parousia of the Lord (God or Christ?) is referred to (Jas 5:7).

A form of the Parousia hope does probably go back to the historical Jesus and represents part of that set of convictions most clearly represented in Matt 19:28 and par. in which Jesus uses eschatological imagery to speak of the future reign with his disciples in the kingdom of God (Kümmel 1966). There was probably no coherent Parousia doctrine in Second Temple Judaism, though the material in the *Similitudes of Enoch* (chaps. 37–71) comes very close to it. This material represents an interpretation of Daniel 7 in a direction parallel to what we find in the future Son of Man sayings in the Synoptic Gospels, though, with the exception of Matt 25:31

there is not much evidence to suggest that the NT was dependent on the *Similitudes* (or vice versa for that matter). There are hints that the expectation of an imminent return of the Messiah may have been deeply rooted in the earliest Aramaic-speaking church if 1 Cor 16:22 (cf. Acts 3:19ff) is anything to go by.

In the book of Revelation there is ample evidence of the belief in the imminent coming of Christ, especially in chaps. 1 and 22, and in Rev 19:11ff (Rissi 1972). This follows the Divine Warrior myth which is here applied to the future conquering messiah....

1 Thess 4:15–17 describes the moment of vindication of the elect (Jewett 1986). Paul indicates that it is a word of the Lord (v 15), and it has several points of contact with the account of the coming of the son of man in Matt 24:30–31. It is, of course, a fragmentary eschatology for a limited purpose (the encouragement of the community dealing with the death of some of their number before the coming of the Kingdom). It indicates how closely intertwined the fulfillment of the eschatological hope had become with the person of Christ, a significant development in emerging Christian eschatology...

A case can be made for supposing that Paul's eschatology in 1 Cor 15:22ff follows the general outline of that found in Revelation 19–21 and presupposes a messianic reign on earth, while Christ subjects the enemies of God to himself (cf. Rev 19:11ff), though this has been a matter of considerable debate (Davies 1965; Schweitzer 1931). Also similar to Revelation 19 is the account of the Parousia in 2 Thessalonians 2 (Jewett 1986). Once again this eschatological fragment is to be found in a context dealing with a particular pastoral problem. As such, like 1 Corinthians 15, it offers only a fragment of the eschatological drama, sufficient to deal with the particular issue confronting the writer...

We saw in examining the Synoptic discourses that there is in fact very little attempt made to sketch the character of the liberation which draws near. The sketch of the ideal society or the ideal world is lacking, a mark of either a lack of any political realism or of a merely utopian fixation. But we should attempt to assess the significance of such an absence, for it would be wrong to suppose that the early Christian writings are devoid of any hope for a better world. Rather they prefer to hint at their conviction that one is coming without being too precise about what it will involve. It is the language of myth and metaphor which is to the fore rather than the offering of any detailed political manifesto. The point is made by the markers in the book of Revelation itself. The reader is reminded at the start of the vision of the Rider on the White Horse that discourse of a very different kind is being used here. The reference to the open heaven is a sign that we have to do with attempts to evoke rather than to describe exhaustively what is to come. It is about what is beyond in the sense that it is both future and different from the patterns of society currently offered. To speak of it, therefore, demands a language which is both less precise and yet more potent and suggestive, a language which after all is what is appropriate when one sets out to speak of that which is still to come...

The book of Revelation offers a timely reminder in its own form about supposing that its preoccupation with eschatological matters offers an opportunity to avoid the more challenging preoccupations of the present. Thus, the vision of hope inaugurated by the exaltation of the Lamb is set within the framework of the Letters of the Seven Churches...we should probably regard the issues being touched on here as typical of a complacent second generation religious movement which is making too many accommodations with the surrounding culture and which needs to be

brought back once again to its countercultural affirmation in the light of its witness to the new age. Thus the promise of a part in the New Jerusalem is linked with present behavior.”