

So, the Parousia, I believe, is a term that draws together both aspects of the Second Coming and considers the whole advent event as one. The Parousia or the Greek word "parosea" suggests then the presence of a dignitary who has been absent and that is exactly what shall transpire when our Lord returns. He who has been absent for 2,000 years shall become present. The event that will initiate the presence again of our Lord on this earth will be the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. So, when we use that word, "parosea" or "Parousia", we are thinking particularly of His presence. I think it draws together both aspects and considers it as one event.

**The third word** that we should know and that will help us in our understanding of this subject is the word, "**Rapture**." Now the word "Rapture" is the only one of the five words that we are going to speak on which does not occur in the New Testament. However, the word, Rapture, is an English word derived from a Latin translation of I Thessalonians 4:16-17 where we read that "we who are alive and remain shall be caught up, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds." The Latin translation of that verb is "rapio." That is the root verb from which the translation comes and we have derived an English word from that Latin word. The English word that we have derived is "Rapture."

Now, the Greek word that is used here for "caught up" is a very picturesque word. It is a word that suggests two primary thoughts. The first thought is the idea of a robbery. It is used in Matthew 12 when the Lord talks about thieves breaking into a house and stealing something. That is the idea. There is a connotation of robbery that is involved. Also, the second thought is that of something that is violent, something that is sudden and something that is almost catastrophic. The Lord anticipates that usage when He uses this very word in John 6:15 where we read that when he perceived that they would "take Him by force" to make Him king He departed from them. He uses this same word. So, the word that is used here suggests the idea of a robbery and something that is taken away by force. That, of course, is exactly the significance of the Latin verb "rapio." It means to come and to seize and to carry off. And, therefore, we have used, we have derived an English word from that— and the English word is "Rapture."

Now, the Rapture fits in as a descriptive phrase for the first aspect of the Second Coming of our Lord. The first aspect is the Rapture. It is at that moment that He shall come to the earth and He shall seize and carry off those who are believers in Jesus Christ. They shall be caught up together with Him. It is going to be a robbery. It is going to be something that will be violent and sudden and that is why it is described as that which initiates the day of the Lord which, in I Thessalonians 5, is described as coming as a thief in the night. The thing that is going to initiate the day of the Lord will be the Rapture of the church. That will take place as a thief in the night. The Lord shall come in the air and He shall, in an act of sudden robbery, snatch away from the earth those who are believers in Him. So, when we use the word Rapture we are speaking of the first aspect of the Second Coming of our Lord. He shall come in the air privately for His saints in the Rapture.

**The fourth word** that we want to speak of is a word that is oftentimes attached with the names of churches. That word is "**epiphany**." The word "epiphany" is again a transliteration of a Greek word—"Epiphania"— which means appearance. This is used in several occasions in relation to the second



aspect of the Second Coming. It is used, for example, in that beautiful text in Titus 2:13 where Paul says, "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing." That is the word. It is the appearing of our Lord. It was a technical term that was used in the days of the New Testament for the visible manifestation of a hidden deity.

So, when the apostle Paul and the Spirit of God takes this word out of its secular use and applies it to the coming again of our Lord Jesus, the connotation is that that hidden deity someday shall appear and He shall be seen. That will take place in the second aspect of the Second Coming of our Lord. This will be an "epiphany." It will be an appearance of the Lord. That makes it in contrast with the Rapture because the Rapture shall be something that will be private. That shall be unseen by the world. In the second aspect, He shall appear and the world shall see Him. Revelation tells us that every eye shall behold Him and so the "epiphany" is the appearance of Jesus Christ on earth before the eyes of the world. This will be the next time that the world sees Him. The last time they saw Him was on a cross and the world never saw the resurrected Christ. The world shall never see Him until that moment when He appears in the second aspect of His Second Coming.

**The last word** that we should notice also describes the second aspect of His Second Coming and that is the word "**revelation.**" This is used on many occasions also in the scriptures to refer to the Second Coming of our Lord. One of the most beautiful is in II Thessalonians 1:7 where we read, "And He shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels." This will be a revelation. He who has been now hidden and unknown by the world shall be revealed to the world. The word "revelation" suggests an unveiling. The unveiling shall take place when Jesus Christ returns to the earth. He who is rejected by the world, He who is unknown by the world shall someday be revealed to the world. That is what the Second Coming shall be. It is in that moment that the "revelation" takes place and the world, then, shall realize He is God. It is at that moment that the Jewish nation shall recognize He is their messiah and they shall mourn over Him whom they have crucified. So, the second aspect of the Second Coming of our Lord will be an appearance. He shall visibly appear and it will be a "revelation." He who is unknown and hidden from the world shall be revealed to them and they shall know Him to be the Son of God to be the messiah and to be the savior of the world.

Now, if we can keep in our minds these words, then we will be able to use them intelligently when we speak of the Second Coming of our Lord. The Second Coming is one event with two aspects. The first aspect is a Rapture. The second aspect is a revelation and an appearance. Together, they form the Parousia which initiates the presence of the absent God. He shall then become present on the earth and establish his millennial kingdom and reign on earth for 1,000 years.

Now, what we would like to do for these four lessons we have together is to focus our attention upon the first aspect of the Second Coming. That is the Rapture. We would like to do it by studying this morning the Rapture as a message of comfort. Next week we would like to study the Rapture as a subject for controversy. We are going to consider the major controversy related to the Rapture next week whether it takes place at the beginning of the tribulation, at the middle of the tribulation or at the end of the