



THE DIVINE STRUGGLE FOR "I" AND "THOU" X:

The Second Coming

BEFORE HIS ASCENSION Jesus Christ affirmed to his disciples, “. . . *I* will come again, and receive *you* unto myself; that where *I* am, there *ye* may be also” (John 14:3, emphases supplied). Jesus thus uttered the inaugural “I” and “Thou.” Later, when he ascended to heaven, angels appeared to the disciples and said, “. . . [T]his same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Why the Supposed “Delay”?

Now nearly 2,000 years have passed, and Jesus has yet to appear. “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22).

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considering this question, we freely confess with the apostle Paul that “now we see through a glass, darkly” and only “know in part” (1 Corinthians 13:12). Yet, as we ponder the passage of time, we reiterate that it is essential for a universe facing an eternity of infinite possibilities to first encounter the “negatives.”¹ Because God has permitted these aberrations in order to teach the universe the consequences of negative actions,² evil “shall not rise up the second time” (Nahum 1:9; cf. Zephaniah 3:15; Matthew 6:13). Moreover, because God as Jesus Christ inaugurated the new order when he encountered and overcame all “negatives” at his First Coming, the universal disclosure of that victory at the transformative Second Coming is certain. So it is that we confidently anticipate an eternally human future of “positives” — “a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1). The unfolding history of “negatives,” Jesus Christ’s inaugural victory over all “negatives,” ongoing gospel developments, and the emergence of reciprocal human relationality for both God and man — all assure us of an approaching Parousia (Second Coming).

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We can also be certain that Jesus Christ will appear in glory: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him . . . ” (Revelation 1:7). How will all eyes see God when he returns? The apostle Paul answered this question when he wrote:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. — 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

Victory for God and Creation

Before ascending Jesus declared that we were no longer his servants but his friends (John 15:15). Finally, this reciprocal “I” and “Thou” relationship will be universally manifest. Finally, the ultimate “I” will greet the risen and transformed “Thou”s. And the reciprocal “I”s will greet their God and all “others” as “Thou.” Thus, the divine struggle for “I” and “Thou” will end in victory for God himself and for his Creation.

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. . . *Thou* art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for *thou* hast created all things, and for *thy* pleasure *they* are and were created.” — Revelation 4:11, emphases supplied.

Endnote

1. See “The Gospel for the Postmodern World III: The ‘Other Side’ of God,” *Outlook* (January 2008); “The Gospel for the Postmodern World IV: The Gift of God,” *Outlook* (February 2008); “The Gospel for the Postmodern World V: The Gift Abused,” *Outlook* (March 2008).
2. See John Polkinghorne, *Reason and Reality: The Relationship between Science and Theology* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), p. 84.

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