

Note to *Outlook* Readers¹

WE INVITE OUR READERS to consider the following correction to previous *Outlook* material:

Outlook's former treatment of the relationship between “representative witnesses” and the Parousia (Second Coming) has been revised in applicable articles. Before, *Outlook* proposed the idea that a frustrated God was silently waiting for representative humans to exhibit a proper knowledge of and response to his person and work, which would then precipitate the Parousia. This could be viewed as uncomfortably reminiscent of the Pharisees’ conviction that their achievement of sufficient holiness would precipitate the coming of the Messiah. Now, *Outlook* envisions a Parousia that emphasizes the reality of a vitally present, active God rather than a frustrated, stymied God. Accordingly, God himself takes the initiative in history and, “when the fulness of the time [is] come,” does not delay but appears again (cf. Romans 9:28; Galatians 4:4). This Parousaic appearance involves a universal enlightenment about his mission and sacrifice for humanity that elicits a reciprocal response for all eternity from his co-humans (Philippians 2:6-11; cf. Romans 14:10-12).

Nevertheless, witnesses are surely involved as the Parousia nears. We continue to believe that, as wise men, shepherds, and Simeon and Anna in the Temple, were representative witnesses at Christ’s First Coming (Matthew 2:1, 2; Luke 2:8-21, 25-38), so we are called to be representative witnesses in anticipation of his promised Second Coming (Acts 1:8; cf. Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1). Thus, he now invites us to witness to his divine revelation, to reciprocally receive his gifts and share them with all others, and to celebrate all that he has done and will do. Soon he will appear to usher in a transformed Creation and a future of unending love, joy and peace (Revelation 21:1, 4-6; 22:5).

Then why the supposed “delay” of the Parousia? In 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.”² Because God has permitted these aberrations in order to teach the universe the consequences of negative actions,³ 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.

Endnotes

1. September 2011.

2. 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).

3. See John Polkinghorne, *Reason and Reality: The Relationship between Science and Theology* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), p. 84.