

Setting Dates for Christ's Return

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There is a proclivity on the part of some religious leaders to make predictions about when Jesus Christ will return, and begin ruling this planet. This is not a new phenomenon because it was documented as beginning in the year 500 CE, and continues to this day (see article entitled "Predictions and Claims for the Second Coming of Christ" at the following: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predictions_and_claims_for_the_Second_Coming_of_Christ).

With this history in mind, it seems almost masochistic that some religious leaders insist they are somehow more enlightened than their predecessors in this venture. Perhaps appearing to be more enlightened to their followers is most alluring to them. Certainly, Christ's own words confirm that their efforts are in vain.

*Therefore, when they (Christ's disciples) had come together, they asked him, saying, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"⁷ And he said to them, "**It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.**" (Ac. 1:6-7; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. note in parenthesis)*

So despite what Christ told his disciples, some religious leaders believe, and/or declare, that Almighty God has given them authority to know, or the ability to figure out, when Christ will return to earth. This is essentially what they are saying to their followers, or leading them to believe. To put this in perspective regarding what the Bible actually says, Jesus Christ's disciples will one day be ruling over the twelve families of Jacob, but they were not given this information (Mt. 19:28). Therefore, any religious leader who claims to

know the timing of Christ's return regards himself as having more authority than Christ's apostles. This is presumptuous, to say the least, and Almighty God warned about this form of deception.

*But **the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die** (Dt. 18:20; emphasis added).*

So these purveyors of prophecy can't have it both ways; they are either speaking with Almighty God's authority, approval, and in accordance with scripture, or they are under the influence of "other gods". And, as the apostle Paul stated,

*For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as **there are many gods and many lords**), ⁶yet for us there is only one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live (1Cor. 8:5-6; emphasis added).*

So any religious leader, who claims to have inside information about the timing of Christ's return, is to be put to death according to God's instruction to ancient Israel; if their prophecy fails to come true.

*But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because **he has spoken in order to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away evil from your midst** (Dt. 13:5; emphasis added).*

In Deuteronomy 13:5 God emphasizes that these false prophets are "turning their followers away from God" through their lies and deceptions. In

essence, the congregation is being trained to look to human leaders rather than Almighty God, who alone is to be worshiped.

*Now **to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to the only God who alone is wise, honor and glory forever and ever** (1Tim. 2:17; cf. Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9; emphasis added).*

Sadly this same dynamic, regarding “turning people away from God” (Dt. 13:5), began shortly after Christ’s resurrection.

*I (Paul) marvel that **you are turning away so soon** from Him (Almighty God) *who called you in the grace (forgiveness of sin) of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷which is not another (of the same kind); but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert (distort) the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed* (Gal. 1:6-8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).*

One aspect of the “gospel” that Christ preached included the fact that no one would know when he would return to earth. Jesus Christ made it very clear that only God, the Father, knows the specific hour, day, and year. Therefore, anyone claiming to know either the hour, day, or year is preaching a different gospel than the one Christ preached.

The concept of looking to human leaders for secret knowledge, including the time of Christ’s return, is nothing new. It goes all the way back to the time of Nimrod and continues in various forms today. Alexander Hislop describes the power that the Babylonian priests had over those who sought to be enlightened by their “secret knowledge”.

*"The secret system of the Mysteries gave vast facilities for imposing on the senses of the initiated by means of the various tricks and artifices of magic...Everything was so contrived as to wind up the minds of the novices to the highest pitch of excitement, that, **after having surrendered themselves implicitly to the priests, they might be prepared to receive anything.**" (The Two Babylons; Alexander Hislop; ch. 1; p. 67; emphasis added).*

It appears that, in the realm of the fallen angels, Satan has worked his “magic” to deceive those who follow him into believing he has “secret knowledge” about the timing of Christ’s return. Some scriptures pertaining to this will be examined shortly, but first it must be emphasized that if Satan purports to know the timing of Christ’s return; so will some of his human religious leaders.

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works (2Cor. 11:13-15).

The truth is that Satan knows time is running out and his judgment is imminent. However, the precise timing of Christ’s return will remain unknown to Satan as some of the following scriptures confirm,

*.... For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because **he knows he has a short time** (Rev. 12:12b; emphasis added).*

Some of the fallen angels appear to have been given secret knowledge from their leader, Satan, because they challenged Christ about the timing of his interaction with them.

*When he (Christ) had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. ²⁹And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with you, Jesus, you Son of God? Have you come here to torment (interrogate) us before the time (Gr. *kairos*; a fixed and definite time, the time when things are brought to crisis, the decisive epoch waited for)" (Mt. 8:28-29; Ed. notes in parentheses).*

By their comments, these fallen angels appear to have been instructed by their leader regarding the time of their judgment, and they don't seem to doubt what Satan told them. In other words, they were convinced that Christ would not judge them at that time. Therefore, it remains that either Satan gave them a future date for this period of judgment, or they came to that conclusion based on their own reasoning.

Another demon also questioned why Christ was doing the things he was doing because it seemed to contradict what that demon had been told by his master, Satan.

Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!" (Mk. 1:23-24; 3:11)

Following Christ's death and resurrection, the demons understood that their judgment was not meant to occur during the time of Christ's earthly ministry. However, this only reinforced in their minds that Satan, or their own reasoning, was correct regarding Christ's future return.

Next, it must be emphasized that demons know what God's faithful and obedient servants are

doing. The importance of this will be explained shortly.

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." ¹⁸And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour (Ac. 16:16-18).

Then some of the itinerant (those who travel) Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." ¹⁴Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. ¹⁵And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" ¹⁶Then the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded (Ac. 19:13-16; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Because fallen angels are aware of what faithful and obedient servants of Almighty God are saying and doing, it is imperative that members of the Body of Christ speak God's truth accurately. Otherwise, we could be responsible for misleading not only those in the physical realm, but also fallen angels.

*To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church **to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places** (Eph. 3:10; cf. 6:12).*

To them (First Covenant prophets) it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have

*been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – **things which angels desire to look into** (1Pet. 1:12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).*

Why would any human being, claiming to represent Jesus Christ, want to provide information to Satan that would prepare him to fight against Christ? That is the same as being divided against Christ.

*And he (Christ) said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in my name, saying, "I am he," and, '**The time has drawn near.**' **Do not follow after them.**" (Lk. 21:8; emphasis added)*

One of the reasons Jesus Christ is returning without warning is to take the Adversary by surprise and then restrain him for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3). Therefore, it is counter-intuitive to give advance notice to an enemy, and this is what some human religious leaders are attempting to do when they proclaim any time frame for Christ's return,

*Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And **the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant** (Jesus Christ), *in whom you delight...* (Mal. 3:1a; emphasis added).*

But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven (NU adds; nor the Son), but my Father only (Mt. 24:36; cf. Rev. 3:3b; 16:15; Ed. note in parenthesis).

It shall be one day which is known to the Lord – neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light (Zech. 14:7; cf. Mt. 24:27).

It is possible that Satan himself provides dates for Christ's return to the fallen angels who follow him. This way they will continue to look to him for enlightenment, or "secret knowledge". When Satan's dates prove to be incorrect, which they will, he can modify them and give a sound reason for any perceived error.

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