

When Will Jesus Return?

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That Jesus Christ will come again is a prominent New Testament doctrine. Every writer refers to the Second Coming. Jesus summarized this great promise in John 14:3: "I will come again...." In this promise the hope of His people has rested through the centuries.

Can we determine when the Lord will return? Even in the first century, some thought they could do so (2 The. 2:1-3). From that time to the present, time-guessers have proliferated. They seem to resurface with each major military conflict or earthquake. Are there "signs of the times" for "the day of the Lord"? Can men discern the time of His coming from the numerology of Daniel or The Revelation?

The fact that many men scattered over several centuries have been "certain" of the accuracy of their predictions of the time of the Lord's return (but just as certainly **wrong**), should be instructive. If the time **could** have been deciphered, it surely **would** have been deciphered by now.

Jesus' coming will be "as a thief in the night," not at a time expected (Mat. 24:43-44; 1 The. 5:2-3; 2 Pet. 3:10).

There are no "signs of the times" for the Lord's return. The "signs" of which Jesus spoke (i.e., wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes) relate to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Legions in A.D. 70 rather than to His Return (Mat. 24:6-22; Mark 13:1-20; Luke 21:5-24). When the disciples saw Jerusalem under siege (Luke 21:20), they were to flee immediately to the mountains for their lives, disregarding all possessions and not looking back (Mat. 24: 15-18; Luke 21:21-24). At the coming of the Lord, all attempts to flee and hide will be futile.

Jesus' words concerning the time of His return could not be plainer. After describing the "signs" by which they could recognize Jerusalem's impending doom, He then said of His Second Coming: "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.... Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh.... Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mat. 24:36, 42, 44). Jesus then told two parables that teach the same message (24:45-51; 25:1-13).

Whether from ego, ignorance, or avarice, all predictions of the time of Jesus' return are doomed to certain failure.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Lighthouse*, weekly bulletin of Northpoint Church of Christ, Denton, TX, November 25, 2007, of which I was editor]

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