

ONLY GOD KNOWS THE FUTURE

“I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come.” (Isa 46:9-10)

Only God knows the future! If the devil knew what was going to happen in the future he never would have brought about the crucifixion of Christ. This was a fatal mistake for the devil, for as you know, it was through death that Jesus destroyed the devil (Heb. 2:14). There are some things even Jesus didn't know. The time of His return, for example. Jesus said: “No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Matt 24:36) Nobody knows the future but God!

It is easiest, of course, to understand prophecies after they have been fulfilled. Jesus said: “I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.” (John 14:29) Take, for example, the words of Daniel: “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens', and sixty-two 'sevens'.” (Dan 9:25) There were three different decrees to rebuild Jerusalem issued by Persian Kings (536 B.C., 457 B.C., and 444 B.C.) In retrospect, we know to select 457 B.C. In retrospect it is easy to see that a day in this prophecy equals a year. $7 \times 7 = 49$, and $62 \times 7 = 434$. $434 + 49 = 483$. In retrospect we can calculate forward 483 years from 457 B.C. and arrive at 26 A.D., the year Jesus was baptized. All of this, of course, is much clearer to us in retrospect than it was to Daniel at the time God inspired him to write those words. The prophets, and even the angels, searched intently with the greatest care trying to find out the time and circumstances about the sufferings and glories of the reign of Christ (1 Pet. 1:10 - 12). They were only permitted to understand that their prophetic utterances were not for themselves but for a future generation.

Our desire to understand the future is further complicated by the fact that some prophecies have more than one fulfillment. Hosea 11:1 is a classic example: “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.” The first fulfillment involved the nation of Israel called out of Egypt in the days of Moses. The second fulfillment was when the baby Jesus was called out of Egypt (Matt. 2:15).

Only God knows the future! When we attempt to understand what will happen tomorrow we must always add “if it be the Lord's will” (Ja.4:15). Someday we will see clearly what is going on, but now we see as in a dark mirror (1 Cor. 13:12). This is one reason why sincere and intelligent scholars differ in their understanding of what will happen in the end times. God has revealed enough, however, for us to say the following with confidence.

- No one knows the exact time when Christ will return but God (Matt. 24:36).
- Even though the certainty of His coming has been proclaimed for nearly 2,000 years, many will be totally surprised and unprepared. Jesus will come when people do not expect Him (Matt. 24:44). At a time when people are expecting peace and safety (1 Thess. 5:3).'
- His coming will be “sudden” (1 Thess 5:3). Like lightning (Matt. 24:27).
- His coming will not be in secret (Matt. 24:26 - 27). Every eye will see Him (Rev. 1:7).
- CHRISTIANS ARE NOT IN DARKNESS THAT THIS DAY SHOULD SURPRISE US (1 Thess. 5:3). CHRISTIANS ARE READY EVERY DAY FOR CHRIST'S RETURN!
- The Lord will descend from heaven with a loud command, the voice of the archangel and the trumpet call of God (1 Thess. 4:16).
- The dead in Christ will rise first and those who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:16 - 17).
- All shall appear before the Judgement seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10).
- The saved will be rewarded with their eternal inheritance (Matt. 25:34).
- The unsaved will be sent away to eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46; Rev.20:15)
- Jesus will hand the kingdom over to God (1 Cor. 15:24).
- God will again be “all in all” or “everything to everyone” (1 Cor. 15:28).