

Day and Hour vs Times and Seasons

Sane and Sensible Perspectives on the Last Days

Jesus and Paul are in complete agreement on this. We will not know the “day and the hour”—the exact moment of the Lord’s Return—but we can know and recognize the “times and the seasons” that lead up to that moment. They both say that the unbelieving world around us will be taken by surprise, but we who believe will see the great Day coming and be ready for it. If we stay awake and keep our (spiritual) eyes open!

"But concerning **that day or that hour**, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Mark 13:32-33 ESV

Now concerning **the times and the seasons**, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 1 Thessalonians 5:1

A Crystal-Clear Warning

The clearest warning against setting an exact date for the return of the Lord is given in this passage by Jesus Himself. He says that even He doesn’t know! That should have settled the question, but it didn’t.

Embarrassing pronouncements of deceived believers (who thought that they knew better than Jesus) have littered two thousand years of Church history. Inevitably, the slow passage of time proved them all resoundingly wrong. Nevertheless, unheeding people continue to bet against the Word of the Lord.



These reckless date-setters seem to be proliferating in our own day. This is itself a sign of the “time and season” we are in. Jesus told us that the season of “[The Birth Pains](#)” leading up to “[The Great Tribulation](#)” would be marked by ungrounded rumors about His Return (Matthew 24). In a way, then, the increase in date setting is understandable. Excitement is mounting. Many in the Body of Christ sense that we are entering the Last Days. We would not be at all surprised if Jesus comes in our lifetime. Are we close enough to it to predict that Day’s arrival?

A Better Way Forward

As a practical measure, we would be far better off trying to understand if we are in the Birth Pains and, if so, just when do we transition from those days into the Tribulation. Since Jesus told us that He was coming at the end of the Great Tribulation (see Matthew 24), that would put us on the timeline! Unfortunately, one popular theory about the Last Days completely negates any possibility of watching the timeline as a way of gauging the Lord’s Return. Pre-tribulation



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rapture enthusiasts believe that Jesus could show up at any moment. Naturally, this encourages a lot of wild speculation and date setting. If there are no rules, then anything is possible.

But Jesus gave us the rules. Those rules limit—as they are meant to—many of the unknowns which would otherwise surround His Return. He has given us a timeline. He calls it the “signs of the times” and the rule is to watch for it. Remember, He was not pleased that people didn’t pay enough attention to the signs which marked His first coming. This timeline that marks His Second Coming has both a complex and a remarkably simple dimension. The simple side of the timeline is that His Return will come at the very end of the Great Tribulation, which in turn follows right on the heels of the Birth Pains. It is only the exact nature and order of the internal features of those two events which can become complex.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

With these considerations in mind, listen to what Jesus has to say in the parable of the fig tree:

28 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 **So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates.** 30 Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 32 **"But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows,** not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come."

Mark 13:28-33 ESV

By this we can see that just as the leafing out of the fig tree tells us that the summer harvest is near, so the signs that Jesus provides should let us all know that His Return is close, even “at the very gates.” Not everyone will know this, of course. Only those who listen to His words and pay attention to the signs will have this legitimate expectancy about the Day that’s coming. Even so, He goes on to warn that the exact day and hour will remain unknown, presumably right up to the very end.

The analogy is a good one. It can be extended in two ways. Even in summer, the exact day and hour of the harvest is not known until it arrives, but you’re looking for those figs to get ready. Likewise, the exact day that marks the end of summer’s warmth is not known until it comes, but you know when summer is winding down. Everyone in the summer season knows that those days are drawing near—and they’re watching. But, if it’s not summer yet, they have no right to expect those days to suddenly arrive.



A Summary of Jesus' Teaching

When it comes to the timing of His return, we can see by this that Jesus makes a clear distinction between signs that are clearly meant to show believers that His Return is drawing near, and the day and hour which will remain a hidden thing. He fully expects that we will know that it is near, but we are not to press Him for the exact moment. This foretold lack of exactness is why our new life is characterized by awaiting His return with an eager watchfulness. But what

we should be watching for is the season. Once the right season arrives—and we know we are in it—the day will inevitably come!

- 1) Dates and hours—the exact moment of His Coming is withheld from all.
- 2) Times and seasons—the near approach of His Coming will be known by many.

Jesus' Teaching Repeated by Paul

The teaching of Paul lines up perfectly with the teaching of Jesus. For people of the world there will be a complacent attitude that life is going on as usual. Unaware of “the times and the seasons,” they will not be watching and preparing for the return of Christ. Instead, they will be surprised and overwhelmed like people suddenly awakened (too late!) by a thief in the night. But it is quite different for people of faith who have no need of further instruction concerning the return of the Lord. The clear implication is that they will be awake and alert to the times and seasons and will not be surprised when the Day finally arrives.

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But **you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.** 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 ESV

Now that we know these things, we won't have to be in darkness either. We can watch for the season of Birth Pains, fully expecting it to transition into the Tribulation. As the Tribulation progresses, we will all be looking with increased urgency and expectancy for the Day of the Lord's Return. By then, these considerations of timing will have become a countdown, as one event of the Tribulation after another unfolds. Our spiritual eyes will be scanning the horizon of prophesied time. As the Tribulation deepens and darkens, we will know with an absolute assurance that the Day of our deliverance is a mere matter of days away.

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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