

Jesus is Coming Back on ...

“Now concerning that day and hour no one knows—neither the angels of heaven nor the Son—except the Father alone.... the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matt. 24:36,44).

Apparently, there is some misunderstanding about these words from Jesus. *What exactly did He mean?* You’ve come to the right place. Let me clear this up for you. When Jesus said no one knows the day or hour of His return, He meant NO ONE KNOWS. Period.

Unfortunately, church history is rife with individuals who didn’t let the clarity and plain language Jesus used get in their way. Jesus said that even He, the Son, did not know the timing of His return, but that did not deter these folks. These brilliant people figured it out. They knew something Jesus didn’t know!

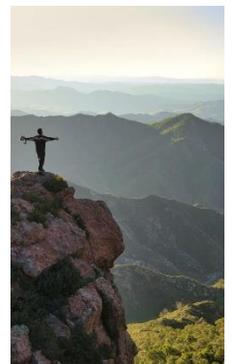
- Irenaeus (130 – c. 202 A.D.) was an early church father who believed Jesus would return in 500 A.D.
- Hippolytus (170 – c. 235 A.D.) was a second-century theologian who joined his voice with Irenaeus, declaring 500 A.D. was the year.
- Even one of the Roman Catholic popes chimed in. Pope Sylvester II was the pope during the close of the first millennium, and Sylvester saw 1/1/1000 as a nice clean date for Jesus to come back.
- Michael Stifel was both a monk and a mathematician who combined his understanding of the Bible with numbers. Using his monkish math skills, he determined Jesus was coming back on October 19, 1533. To be even more precise, Jesus would return at 8:00 a.m. (He didn’t specify a time zone.)
- Such predictions were not just from men. Joanna Southcott from Devon, England predicted that Jesus would return in 1814. Her prediction was different in that Jesus was going to come the same way He came the first time. Joanna



herself was pregnant with the Christ-child, and His return would be ushered in when she gave birth to Him on October 19, 1814. But Joanna never gave birth—only because she was never pregnant. This did not keep 100,000 people from following her.

- William Miller was a Baptist minister who figured the date out. As he studied biblical prophecies, he determined Jesus would return sometime around 1843-1844. Later the date was set at October 22, 1844, a day that became known as The Great Disappointment. Miller gained a large following, and out of this group came the Seventh-Day Adventists.
- Charles Taze Russell determined Jesus was coming back in 1874. According to Russell, Jesus did just that, but He did so *invisibly*. The Russellites who followed him later took the name Jehovah’s Witnesses. Jehovah’s Witnesses claim Jesus began His reign as king in 1914.
- Edgar C. Whisenant was a NASA engineer who tied the return of Jesus to 1988. He gave his rationale in the book *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988*. When Jesus didn't return, he released a new book, *89 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1989*. Then there was a publication about 1993 ... then 1994 ...

I could go on and on and mention Emanuel Swedenborg, George Rapp, Joseph Smith, Sun Myung Moon, Herbert W. Armstrong, and Harold Camping among others. No need to. You get the point. History has given us plenty of individuals who wasted their time trying to determine a date Jesus said we wouldn’t know.



There’s a far better use of our time. Let’s live our lives in anticipation of Christ’s return. I don’t mean go sit on a mountain and wait to hear a trumpet. Be busy doing what you’re supposed to be doing. Get busy living for Him. When He comes back, let Jesus find you doing your work and serving His kingdom.