



The Day & Hour of the Lord's Coming
by Pastor F.M. Riley

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“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only,” Matthew 24:36.

Introduction

I am not the least bit ashamed that the return of the Lord to resurrect and rapture His people to glory is my ***“blessed hope,” Titus 2:13.*** Throughout 53 years in the Lord's ministry, I have looked forward to, and longed for, the return of Christ. I find *nothing* in this present evil world that causes me to want to stay here. The only real future for God's people is in the future kingdom of our Lord. May I remind our readers that the Lord even instructed His people to pray for its coming, ***Matthew 6:9-10; Luke 11:1-2.*** May God hasten the day!

Because of my love for the Lord, and my longing for His return, I have diligently studied the prophecies of God's Word. Many of my studies on Bible prophecy have been put into print and circulated all over this country and other parts of the world. As a result I have come into contact with many others who also long for the Lord's return. Glory!

However, there have always been some, mostly “professing Christians,” who have responded to my studies by informing me that, *“No man knows the day or the hour of the Lord's return.” [A misquote of Scripture].* Over the years I have learned that most of the people who respond in this manner are actually seeking to dismiss the entire subject of the Lord's return. They just don't want to hear about it, or even think about it. By *misquoting* our text, they seem to think that relieves them of any obligation to seriously study the prophetic Word, or to faithfully ***“watch” [Mark 13:34-37]*** for the Lord's return, or to witness to others about the shortness of time and the soon coming of the Lord. Such people would rather devote their time and energy to living the ***“abundant life” [John 10:10]*** without being bothered about the future. A good description of such ***“religionists”*** is found in ***2 Timothy 3:1-5.***

I want to assure our readers that I wholeheartedly agree that no man knows the ***“day and hour”*** when the Lord is coming to resurrect and rapture His people to glory. But my agreement is not based on the same motives that I have observed in some of my critics. Rather, I believe that no man knows the ***“day and hour”*** when the Lord is coming for the following Scriptural reasons:

Earth's Time Zones

First... At some point in the past, the earth, by international agreement, was divided into 24 time zones with a fixed international date line. This was done in order to avoid mass confusion in world trade among modern industrialized nations. What this means is that at any given time over the earth there are two days in progress. If one stands in a certain location at any given hour there is always one day in progress and another day approaching. For instance, if I listen to the evening news at 6:00 p.m. today here in Missouri, it is already 2:00 a.m. tomorrow in Moscow, Russia.

The Lord, in predicting His return to rapture His people to glory was well aware of how "time" is affected by the revolution of the earth. After all, He created the earth,

John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17. Certainly the Lord well knew that two days are always in

progress on the earth at any given time. Therefore it would be absolutely impossible for the Lord Himself to name a specific "**day and hour**" when He would return, unless He qualified it by including a specific location on the earth. But the Lord couldn't do that either, because His Word plainly teaches that the resurrection and rapture of believers will take place all over the whole earth at the exact same time. Glory!

The Lord Himself illustrated this truth by telling His people that when the rapture occurs some believers will be in bed asleep [*night time*], **Luke 17:34**. Elsewhere some will be at the mill having their grain ground into flour [*morning or late afternoon*], **Luke 17:35**. Still somewhere else men will be working in the field [*the heat of the day*], **Luke 17:36**.

This truth is again illustrated in **Mark 13:35**. Somewhere on earth it will be evening, somewhere else midnight, somewhere else it will be the wee hours of the morning, and still elsewhere the day will be dawning.

Since there is always two days covering 24 hours in progress on the earth at any given time, and since the rapture is to take place all over the earth at the same time, it is just a matter of simple logic that the Lord could not tell His people "**the day and hour**" when He is going to return for them, **John 14:3**. This is plain enough for anyone to understand.

The Jewish Holy Days

Second.....A serious study of **Matthew 24-25**, **Mark 13**, and **Luke 21** will reveal that the Olivet Discourse was given to four of the Lord's Jewish disciples. Those four Jews were not representing the church as some claim. Rather, they were representing Israel and the Jews. The entire discourse is to the Jews, for the Jews, and about the Jews.

When the Jews were in the Holy Land, as in centuries past, they all observed the Holy Days [**Leviticus 23**] on the specific days appointed by God. No problem! The Holy Days of the Jews were given as prophetic types of events to be fulfilled later in God's great plan of the ages, **Colossians 2:16-17**. Every great event recorded in the Bible occurred on a Jewish Holy Day or in connection with such a day. One such event clearly predicted in the Scriptures that is yet to occur is the resurrection and rapture of God's people. Keep this in mind.

After the Jews were scattered all over the earth, they were forced to adopt two days for the observance of any specific Holy Day. This was done in order to allow every God fearing Jew, no matter where they lived on the earth, the opportunity to observe that Holy Day. But due to the 24 time zones on the earth, a given Holy Day might already have been observed on one side of the earth, and yet still be continuing on the other side of the earth.

It should therefore be obvious that the Lord could not tell His disciples that the resurrection and rapture of believers would take place on any certain Jewish Holy Day, for while it is being observed on one side of the earth, it may not have even arrived on the other side [*or it may already be past on the other side*]. Remember that God's Word teaches that the rapture is to take place at the exact same time all over the earth.

Natural versus Spiritual

Third.....I fully accept the statement of the Lord that *"no man"* knows the *"day and hour"* when the Lord will come to resurrect and rapture His people to glory. The Scripture plainly states that *"the natural man"* only knows *"the things of a man."* See **1**

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Corinthians 2:11 and **2:14**. Again, in **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** it is specifically stated, *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost..."* [*the natural man*]. It is then obvious that a *"man,"* born only of nature, cannot possibly know or understand the spiritual aspects of the resurrection and rapture, or for that matter, anything else about the spiritual truths of God's Word. Until such time comes that a lost person is willing to repent of their sin and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, they will never know or understand spiritual truth. The Lord Himself said, *"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me,"* **John 6:45**.

Folks, God's Word is the only spiritual light God ever bestowed upon mankind, other than the Lord Himself. But He set limits even on His Word. When a lost soul is willing to *"hear"* the Word of God and believe it [**Romans 10:17**], then God will use it to enlighten that soul about His Son, the only *"way"* of salvation, **John 14:6**. Once that soul has been enlightened, they are then in a position to receive Christ as their Savior,

or to reject Him. If that person does choose to repent and receive Christ as Savior, then and only then will God's Holy Spirit begin to guide them into **"all truth," John 16:13**. Glory! That guiding includes the truth about the return of Christ, **John 16:13-15**.

Conclusion

While I wholeheartedly agree that **"no man"** knows the **"day and hour"** that the resurrection and rapture of God's people will occur, misquoting **Matthew 24:36** and **Mark 13:32** does not justify refusing to study the great prophetic truths set forth in God's Word. Such a refusal to study Bible prophecy is **"willing ignorance"** [**2 Peter 3:3-7**] any way one looks at it. Neither does misquoting our text justify the cowardice of a person who would like to proclaim the great prophetic truths of God's Word, but who is afraid of what others [**"the brethren"**] may think about him. Folks, there is a whole lot worse things that can happen to a person than simply being labeled a **"date setter."**

While it is true that **"no man"** presently knows the **"day and hour"** of the Lord's return, this does not prevent God's people from being able to **"see the day approaching," Hebrews 10:25**. Neither does it prevent God's people from knowing the month or the year that the resurrection and rapture is going to occur. We are plainly told in **1 Thessalonians 5:1-6** that God's people **"know perfectly"** the **"times and seasons"** and **"are not in darkness."** The Word of God is plain that the Lord does not want His people to be in darkness concerning the end of this age. See **Amos 3:7, John 16:12-14, 2 Peter 1:19-21**, and many other related passages.

Folks, it is quite clear that God gave Noah an advance warning of the flood, even telling him the exact day the flood would begin, **Genesis 7:4; 7:10**. Will the Lord give His people living today such an advance warning? I have no idea! What I do know is that the Lord said, **"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be," Matthew 24:37**. It is absolutely obvious from God's Word, that Almighty God does not want His people [**those truly saved**] to be in ignorance of the time of His return.

May the Lord bless this study to the hearts and minds of every reader is my prayer.