

AN UNHEALTHY OBSESSION

“He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority’.” —ACTS 1:7

For events in the history of the human race, God has His calendar in place. There are times and dates He has set that have not yet come into being, and one of the most analyzed and debated of all is the return of Christ and the end of this age. These are set by God’s authority, and Jesus tells us explicitly, “It is not for us to know.”

At the time of Jesus’ ascension, the disciples were looking up to heaven, and suddenly two men, dressed in white, appeared beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). This is a glorious certainty. Jesus Christ is coming back. He said, “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Mark 13:32).

Despite the fact that Jesus is telling us it isn’t our business to know when He will return, there is incredible curiosity among Christians about the time and date. For some, it has become an unhealthy obsession. They’re continually dissecting and analyzing sequences of events, applying mathematical formulas and some have even devoted their ministry to becoming experts on reading “the signs of the times”.

We can walk into any Christian book store today and see how it’s become big business. If there’s a blip in the Middle East, the prophecy gurus find some way of fitting it into an end-times scenario. There are

countless newspaper and magazine articles; tabloid covers, movies, novels and many documentaries with sensational predictions, some with unrestrained confidence concerning the end of this age. It's utter nonsense and a waste of time.

Paul tells us, "You know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2). And Jesus said, "You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him" (Luke 12:40). Our expectation of Christ's return is vital, but any prediction, speculation or proclamation, especially that which leads others to believe when He's coming, is not only wrong, but forbidden. It's like climbing the Tower of Babel and foolishly trying to take from God what belongs to Him. All expectations are going to meet with a crashing blow. "No one knows," says Jesus, and God will keep it that way. What is in our best interest is to live everyday as though He were coming today.

PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, I long for the day that every knee will bow and tongue confess that You are Lord, and so I long for your return... but in your timing, Lord, as none other will do.

TO REFLECT UPON: How would I respond to someone predicting a time of Christ's return?