

The Set Times

"It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority."¹ How many times have these words of Jesus discouraged or excused you from coming to the place to boldly approach the Father in the Name of Jesus for the times set by the Father? Too many, and that is the truth, for after all Jesus did say, "It is not for you to know the times..." therefore we have assumed that it is a general statement for everyone to come under... or is it?

"It is not for you to know the times..." would certainly apply to everyone, especially if you were the apostles who had not believed in the good news on resurrection morning to go to Galilee immediately as the women told you (twice, even thrice), but instead made Jesus walk through a locked door or wall to enter the room where you were hiding for fear of the Jews.

It would certainly apply to any believer, disciple or even apostle who would not stay where Jesus told him to wait, but wanted to go fishing instead because he was bored with waiting. Ask Peter, "Why was there a need to go fishing?" It would certainly apply to those who having seen the risen Christ and heard Him speak of the Kingdom of God again and again, yet asked Him in the last few moments of His time on Earth a question like, "Lord, are You at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"²

Indeed, if you are not attentive, obedient and faithful in going when told to go and coming when told to come... who would want to let you know the times They have set for the future? And finally, if God did tell you the set times, would you announce it like so many have done?

Jesus said to the eleven, "So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask Me anything. I tell you the truth, My Father will give you whatever you ask in My Name."³ This was a promise (is a promise) that Jesus gave them concerning the change that would come about as a result of His death and resurrection. After that **day of joy**, no longer will they (we) have to ask Jesus for anything, but can now go directly to the Father in His Name and receive whatever we ask in His Name.

So if the disciples really wanted to know when Israel would be restored, and it will be, they need not have asked Jesus but gone straight to the Father. If they had done that, they would have shown honour and faith to the words Jesus had given them.

Now consider the state of mind Jesus would have been in at the end of the 40 days... He is finally leaving and the Holy Spirit will take over, and what a 40 days it had been... no one showed up on resurrection morning at Galilee. Some did not stay in Jerusalem as ordered so the Holy Spirit could not come on them while Jesus was still on Earth, and when Jesus rounded them up, Peter was still showing jealousy about John, others were still doubting, and now in these last few moments they asked Him for something that He had told them to ask the Father for now that He is risen!

Jesus may be divine, loving and patient, but He is also a Man. Does it surprise you now that when John saw Him again almost 90 years later, He was almost unrecognisable? His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of rushing waters.⁴ Why did Jesus appear in this form to His beloved apostle? It is not exactly the doe-eyed, handsome, welcoming, idolised version you see on so many catholic icons. Could His hair have turned white from worry as worry whitens the hair of men? Eyes like blazing fire... is that the look of One who is waiting to welcome John?

Understand the events that would have affected His temperament, which is why the reply in Acts 1.7 was, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority." This is a reply to those who have not obeyed or believed what they have heard anyway so far... so what business did they have of knowing the times of the future major events?

The temperament of Jesus when He was speaking to them in John 16 was very different. Though He was facing the cross, He was also using the time to look beyond the cross and so spoke of the change that would come as a result of His suffering, which gave Him succour... as it is written: Let us fix our eyes on

¹ Acts 1.7

² Acts 1.6

³ John 16.22-23

⁴ Revelation 1.14-15

Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.⁵

The truth is you can ask the Father in His Name and He will give you whatever you ask for, even the set times... provided you are one who would have responded immediately to the good news of the women and went. As an aside, the use of the women by the Lord to tell the men was also the proof that the curses had been removed by Jesus' death. For it was a woman who first brought bad news to a man... the message of Satan, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."⁶ Eve brought the fruit of the tree of **death**, but her daughters – Mary, Mary and the others – brought the good news of the Tree of Life.

The change effected by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is of such seismic consequence to the relationship a man can have with God, which has rarely been appreciated by us.

You see, Jesus in speaking of the day when He will see them again in John 16.22, said, "In that day you will no longer ask Me anything."⁷ Up till now (that is, from the day they were called and chosen) the eleven always had to ask Jesus about whatever they did not know or understand... hence the many occasions when the disciples would question Him when they were alone. However, Jesus spoke of the change that would occur as a result of resurrection day, "In that day you will no longer ask Me anything. I tell you the truth, My Father will give you whatever you ask in My Name."

That is the first change... and had they (we) been there on the mount on resurrection morning, they (we) would have experienced being able to ask the Father directly for anything. In the case of the eleven, their desire to know the dates set for Israel's restoration would have been given to them had they asked... had they been there... how different things would have been. And now this last question, "Lord, are You at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" Little wonder the answer, now that you understand the circumstances and perspective of the day!

As so many have gone before us claiming to know the hour and day, and have been proven false... to now speak of being able to ask the Father for His set dates and times seems blasphemous and foolish. However, do not let the foolishness of the foolish ever deter you if you are wise enough to work for the honour of the One who sent you. The wisdom to work for the One who sent you is shrewdness and cunningness in its nicest form. The wisdom to work for the honour of the One who sent you has nothing to do with faith or even love, for many believe the Lord but do not work for His honour... many love the Lord but do not work for His honour. Indeed, a man who is working for the honour of the One who sent him need to not just profess his faith or love, but by his work and his attitude to his work, he must also profess it. No truer faith or love can you profess for the Lord than to always be found striving for your personal best in working for His honour. And if you are focussed on your personal best, then it will safeguard you from foolish arguments like who is the greatest and spare the Lord some distress. No, indeed anyone who is completely focussed on his personal best for his Lord's honour is a source of pure joy to Him... like ripe figs early in the morning when He was hungry or grapes in the wilderness when He was thirsty and hungry.

So ask... boldly approach the throne... not of grace to receive mercy in our time of need, but boldly approach the throne of authority to receive knowledge in our need of time... our need of knowing the set times and dates, those that have been set by the Father... for there is one coming who will change the set times to continue the deception of the world if he could. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress His saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.⁸

We need not waste time speculating who this king is, but rather, see what he will do:

1. Speak against the Most High;
2. Suppress His saints;
3. Change the set times and the laws.

There are many kings who have done that and can fit this description... e.g. the emperor Constantine and any of the bishops of the early churches who set different dates for the commemoration of the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus and the laws that the church is to follow... beginning with James the Younger who took us from practising the laws of Jesus to the laws of Moses.

⁵ Hebrews 12.2

⁶ Genesis 3.4-5

⁷ John 16.23

⁸ Daniel 7.24-25

What is more important for you, elect, is to come to the place where you know the dates and times set by the Father on His authority so that you know, not believe or speculate, but know the times and dates not only of Israel's restoration as a kingdom, but also the hours and dates set for every event that is about to happen in the coming days.

The certainty of this knowledge is not so that you might be a world famous prophet of God who can prophesy the next earthquake and so sell your books to bolster your ratings for your ministry. No, elect, in the days of distress that are upon the world, such ministries whose existence depends on mammon's health and power will be paralysed and destroyed. No, **the certainty of this knowledge is so that more and more you will always be at the right place at the right time to do whatever needs to be done with the maximum effectiveness and efficiency.** For nothing shortens the days needed more than effectiveness and efficiency, and these only come with a consistency of practice and an honest appraisal of one's efforts and repentance. The stupid, foolish pride of the pharisees and sadducees will be the downfall of those who say theirs is the only way, theirs is the only church. Rather a wise stubbornness in holding onto the teachings of Jesus and preparedness to put them into practice with innovative flexibility and honest humility that when one practises anything, one is not perfect yet... will keep you on solid rock.

The wind of change is blowing, the clouds are gathering, the river is rising, and the torrent is building up strength, but there is still a little time left. Time enough for repentance and to believe so that you will repent and believe the testimony of the Father, **"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased..."** and obey His command, **"...listen to Him!"**⁹ if you are still going to the brothel and fellowshiping with the prostitutes. As He has said, **"Come out of her, My people..."**¹⁰

But as for you, elect, based on how you have been following Jesus, the time has come for one and ones of you to ask the Father in His Name and He will give you whatever you ask, even the dates and times set by His own authority. So come urgently to the throne of authority and receive that which is needed for success in His Name and honour.

Just remember, elect, this simple truth: "Those who know do not tell; those who tell do not know." Doxology.

⁹ Matthew 17.5 NASB; Mark 9.7; Luke 9.35

¹⁰ Revelation 18.4