

“YOU WILL BE WITNESSES OF ME”

Our generation is undergoing significant trials and tribulations. Events are occurring in a manner that has prompted many to ask “Is the end near?” Others, responding to this interest, have offered explanations and interpretations of Bible prophecies, each claiming that their interpretation is correct. Some have even been so bold as to pinpoint specific years and dates for end-time events. Yet, in each instance, those interpretations failed.

This interest in end-time prophecy is not new. We recall that after Jesus completed his earthly ministry, and just prior to his ascension to heaven, his apostles wanted to know if the end of their system of things (or the end of the gentile times) was about to occur.

“When, now, they had assembled, they went asking him: ‘Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?’” – *Acts 1:6*

Ever since then, practically every generation expected the end of their ‘system of things’ would occur during their life times. Certainly man’s history reveals many times when such an end would have been welcomed. We think of the early persecution of the Christians in the first few centuries. We think of the merciless persecution during the so-called Dark Ages. We think of the horrific Holocaust, and the devastating World Wars. Yet each time, the prayed for, and anticipated, end did not come. As such, modern man has good reason to doubt the present day interpretations of Bible end-time prophecy.

In response to the end-time inquiry by his apostles, Jesus told them, in essence, it was none of their business.

He said to them: ‘**It does not belong to you** to get knowledge of the times or seasons which the Father has placed in his own jurisdiction.’” – *Acts 1:7*

On a prior occasion, when they asked him when the prophecies he spoke of would be fulfilled, he told them:

“Concerning that day and hour **nobody knows**, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.” – *Matthew 24:36*

But Jesus did tell them something that they should concern themselves with. Instead of being distracted by future events, Jesus said:

“[Y]ou will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and **you will be witnesses of me** both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth.” – *Acts 1:8*

That counsel applies to us today. Though we should keep awake and keep our senses, our focus should be on the things we have control over. Instead of focusing on when the end will come, or when certain Bible prophecies will be fulfilled, followers of Jesus should be spending their effort and energy being witnesses of Jesus with a sense of urgency.

Jesus' Witnesses

Before Jesus arrived on earth, man was given a glimpse of God's character and purpose by His prophets. On occasion, His prophets would actually speak on God's behalf as did the prophet Isaiah. Early in the 8th century B.C.E., Isaiah was prompted to say on behalf of God:

“You are my witnesses,” is the utterance of Jehovah, “even my servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and have faith in me, and that you may understand that I am the same One. Before me there was no God formed, and after me there continued to be none. I—I am Jehovah, and **besides me there is no savior.**”
– *Isaiah 43:10-11*

What Isaiah spoke was true. In the 8th century B.C.E., the savior of the Israelites was Jehovah. Jehovah brought them along and continued to educate them according to their capacity to understand. He also revealed that a time would come when the people would have an even greater understanding and appreciation of Him.

“For this is the covenant that I shall conclude with the house of Israel after those days,” is the utterance of Jehovah. **“I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people.** And they will no more teach each one his companion and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know Jehovah!’ for **they will all of them know me,** from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them,” is the utterance of Jehovah. “For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more.” – *Jeremiah 31:33-34*

This prophecy was fulfilled about 800 years later by means of Christ Jesus who more accurately explained God. (*John 1:18*) In the 8th chapter of Hebrews, the apostle Paul identified Jesus as the mediator of the new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah, and that it was through Jesus that the law would be written in the hearts of men:

“But now [Jesus] has obtained a more excellent public service, so that **he is also the mediator of a correspondingly better covenant,** which has been legally established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, no place would have been sought for a second; for he does find fault with the people when he says: “‘Look! There are days coming,’ says Jehovah, ‘and I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant.’” – *Hebrews 8:6-8*

From that point forward, Jesus Christ would be the revealer to and savior of man:

“Because the Law was given through Moses, the undeserved kindness and the truth came to be through Jesus Christ. No man has seen God at any time; the only-begotten god who is in the bosom [position] with the Father is the one that has explained him.” – *John 1:17-18*

As savior, Jesus brought with him a new message, a saving message, a message that extended, enhanced and shed light upon the messages of prophets such as Isaiah:

“God, who **long ago** spoke on many occasions and in many ways to our forefathers by means of the prophets, **has at the end of these days spoken to us by means of a Son**, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the systems of things.” – *Hebrews 1:1-2*

So while those before Jesus were indeed witnesses of Jehovah, after Jesus arrived, things would change. No more would they be witnesses of Jehovah, they would be witnesses of Jesus!

The Father authorized this change in roles when He gave Christ “all authority in heaven and on earth.” (*Matthew 28:18*) Paul further explained:

“. . . God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every [other] name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground, and **every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.**” – *Philippians 2:9-11*

In fact, failing to be a witness of Jesus is an affront to the Father who said:

“This is my Son, the beloved; **listen to him.**” – *Mark 9:7*

And it is an affront to Jesus and a grave disrespect to all that he lived and died for. If we are conducting our ministry as did pre-Christian witnesses who testified to the Mosaic Law and the teachings of the prophets, we are in effect saying that Jesus died for nothing.

“I am impaled along with Christ. It is no longer I that live, but it is Christ that is living in union with me. Indeed, **the life that I now live in flesh I live by the faith that is toward the Son of God**, who loved me and handed himself over for me. I do not shove aside the undeserved kindness of God; **for if righteousness is through law, Christ actually died for nothing.**” – *Galatians 2:20-21*

All who came to be called Christians (*Acts 11:26*) were known as the witnesses of Jesus:

“I John, your brother and a sharer with you in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in company with Jesus, came to be in the isle that is called Patmos for speaking about God **and bearing witness to Jesus.**” – *Revelation 1:9*

Those who make up the spiritual ‘seed of Abraham’ are the witness of Jesus:

“And the dragon grew wrathful at the woman, and went off to wage war with the remaining ones of her seed, **who observe the**

commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus.” – Revelation 12:17

Even certain angels consider themselves witnesses of Jesus:

“At that I fell down before his feet to worship him. But he tells me: ‘Be careful! Do not do that! All I am is a fellow slave of you and of your brothers **who have the work of witnessing to Jesus**. Worship God; for the **bearing witness to Jesus** is what inspires prophesying.’” – *Revelation 19:10*

Among the modern day preachers who call themselves Jehovah’s Witnesses, there is a growing number of witnesses of Jesus – the sons and daughters of the Father and heirs to the kingdom of the heavens. (*Romans 8:16-17*) And there is a growing number of witnesses of Jesus in other denominations. If we recognize ourselves as among the sons of God and brothers of Christ, then we, too, must honor the Father’s wishes, listen to Jesus and be **his** witnesses.

The Things that Jesus Commanded

There are many things one can teach – science, history, mathematics, philosophy, botany, archeology, etc. One can teach things taught by Moses, things taught by the various prophets of Israel, even things that arise from one’s own thinking and reasoning. All of these things are good to know, and it would not be wrong to teach them. However, witnesses of Jesus should be focused on teaching ‘all the things that **Jesus** commanded.’ (*Matthew 28:20*)

Many of the things Jesus commanded are contained in the Christian Greek Scriptures, also called the New Testament. Here are some of the things that Jesus taught:

- Jesus taught that the time had come when mankind could enter, actually and literally, into the Kingdom of the Heavens:

“Repent, you people, for **the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.**” – *Matthew 4:17*

“Then he went around throughout the whole of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and **preaching the good news of the kingdom** and curing every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity among the people.” – *Matthew 4:23*

“Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the **kingdom of the heavens belongs to them**. Happy are those who mourn, since they will be comforted. Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth. Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, since they will be filled. Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy. Happy are the pure in heart, since **they will see God**. Happy are the peaceable, since **they will be called ‘sons of God.’** Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake, since **the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them**. Happy are you when people reproach

you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and leap for joy, since **your reward is great in the heavens**; for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.” – *Matthew 5:3-11*

- Jesus taught that God is our Father:

“You must pray, then, this way: ‘**Our Father** in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth. Give us today our bread for this day; and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one.’ For if you forgive men their trespasses, **your heavenly Father** will also forgive you; whereas if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will **your Father** forgive your trespasses.” – *Matthew 6:9-15*

- Jesus taught that we are all brothers:

“But you, do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, whereas **all you are brothers**. Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father, the heavenly One.” – *Matthew 23:8-9*

- Jesus taught that from the very beginning of time, the Father wanted mankind to have an ownership interest in the heavenly kingdom:

“Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, **inherit** the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world.’” – *Matthew 25:34*

- Jesus taught that in order to enter the Kingdom of the Heavens, we must be born again:

“In answer Jesus said to him: “Most truly I say to you, Unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” – *John 3:3*

- Jesus taught that we must strive to imitate him as he imitated our Father:

“You must accordingly be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” – *Matthew 5:48*

- Jesus taught that we must endeavor to know him and the Father:

“This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.” – *John 17:3*

- Jesus taught that we only need to keep two ‘commandments’ in order to please God:

“[O]ne of them, versed in the Law, asked, testing him: ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ He said to him: ‘**You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.**’ This is the greatest and first commandment. The second, like it, is this, ‘**You must love your neighbor as yourself.**’ On these two commandments the whole Law hangs, and the Prophets.” – *Matthew 22:35-40*

- Jesus taught us to seek forgiveness of our sins and to forgive others:

“‘Give us today our bread for this day; and **forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.** And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one.’ For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; whereas if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” – *Matthew 6:11-15*

- Jesus taught us to stop judging others:

“**Stop judging that you may not be judged;** for with what judgment you are judging, you will be judged; and with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you. Why then do you look at the straw in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the rafter in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Allow me to extract the straw from your eye’; when, look! a rafter is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First extract the rafter from your own eye, and then you will see clearly how to extract the straw from your brother’s eye.” – *Matthew 7:1-5*

- Jesus taught us the supreme law of fairness:

“**All things,** therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them; this, in fact, is what the Law and the Prophets mean.” – *Matthew 7:12*

- And Jesus gave us a work to do:

“**Go therefore** and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.” – *Matthew 28:19-20*

We note that all of Jesus’ teachings honor and uplift the individual. He was not a proponent of group salvation. No more could mankind think that by associating with a particular religious group, he would be saved. As he told the Samaritan woman, the Father is not looking at which ‘mountain’ we worship at. The Father is concerned with the spirit of the worship of the individual:

“Jesus said to her: ‘Believe me, woman, The hour is coming when **neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem** will you people worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, because salvation originates with the Jews. Nevertheless, the hour is coming, and it is now, when **the true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth**, for, indeed, the Father is looking for suchlike **ones** to worship him.” – *John 4:21-23*

Jesus taught things that effect our minds, our hearts, and our spirits, not just our conduct. He taught things of universal value that can be applied no matter where we live on earth and no matter our circumstances. Jesus taught things that elevate man, not things that degrade us. He taught us things that free us, not things that bring us into slavery again. And he taught us the path to everlasting salvation no matter the state of world events.

In the first century C.E., the followers of Jesus were initially able to remain in the synagogues preaching and teaching about the Christ. But the time came when they had to separate. The time came when the Jews no longer tolerated the new wine of Christ’s teachings. They preferred the promises of their prophets, rather than the promises of the greatest prophet, Jesus Christ. They preferred to serve under law, rather than to be a free people. And they preferred an earthly kingdom rather than a heavenly one. Those were the major differences between the old witnesses of Jehovah, and the new witnesses of Jesus.

Jesus understood that his followers would remain among the unbelieving Jews for a time. He told them:

“Look! I am sending you forth as sheep amidst wolves; therefore prove yourselves cautious as serpents and yet innocent as doves.” – *Matthew 10:16*

These words of Jesus tell us that we should be aware of all things like a serpent is aware of his surroundings. Yet we must be innocent of the error of men. We can know what man teaches, but a witness of Jesus cannot be teaching those things. As Paul said:

“But **speaking the truth**, let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ. . . . Wherefore, now that you have put away falsehood, **speak truth each one of you with his neighbor**, because we are members belonging to one another.” – *Ephesians 4:15, 25*

Yes, we are to speak and teach truth. But how can one know what is truth? Pontius Pilate had the same question. (*John 18:38*) Though truth was staring him in the face, he could not recognize it. Today, we know that truth derives from the things Jesus himself did and taught. John wrote that Jesus was with the Father in the beginning. (*John 1:1-2*) Surely, Jesus knows what is true and what is necessary. As he said:

“Jesus said to him: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” – *John 14:6*

All who teach what is true according to the way Jesus explained it are likewise witnesses of Jesus. By their actions, they obey God as ruler and openly confess their union with Jesus Christ as he acknowledges and openly confesses them to the Father. (**Matthew 10:32-33**) All witness of Jesus will joyfully and eagerly spread Jesus' teaching throughout the inhabited earth. And then the end will come. (**Matthew 24:14**)

“Elaia Luchnia”

ANNOUNCEMENT: *The authors of this site recognize themselves as witnesses of Jesus, and hereby change the meaning of the “JW” at the end of the website address – www.AnointedJW.org – to signify that **we bear witness to Jesus.***

We are aware that there are other groups that have formally taken on the name “Jesus’ Witnesses” “Witnesses of Jesus” and “Jehovah’s Christian Witnesses.” We are not affiliated with those groups. We are witnesses of Jesus by means of our conduct and our actions, particularly by our preaching and teaching the things Jesus taught.

This announcement does not minimize our love for Jehovah. We believe the greatest show of our consecration to doing the Father’s will is to openly confess union with, and follow, His son ‘no matter where he goes.’ And so we boldly and proudly identify ourselves as being witnesses to Christ, and therefore being “Christians.”

We have not separated or disassociated ourselves from our brothers and sisters in the organization and will not do so as long as there is hope that those taking the lead at headquarters will respond to the plain and open teachings of Jesus. In the meantime, we hope more witnesses of Jesus will make themselves known by preaching and teaching ‘the things Jesus commanded’ and being his witnesses to most distant parts of the earth.