

Only the Father Knows?

The crucial question which begs asking here is why Christ, when questioned by His disciples, did not know the date of His return in advance? The only One who then knew in advance is identified, or so it is thought, in, *'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.'*¹ To many, it would seem strange that Christ would not be privy to this; but it appears to many that He is not, or, at least, was not. Christ is the very person who states, *'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,'* who knows the end from the beginning, but, somewhat strangely, not the date of the Second Coming or, presumably, that of the Day of the Lord. Eadie views it differently: 'Our Lord foretold the time and the most remarkable particulars, and it is not reasonable to suppose that He knew not the predicted day.'²

'Many ignorant persons suppose that the time of the end of this dispensation and of the Second Coming of Christ is altogether hidden from human discovery, but *"they err, not knowing the Scriptures,"* which distinctly intimate that the time of the end shall be revealed to watchful Christians by the prophecies.³ The text in Mark, *"Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father,"*⁴ was spoken in the present tense before the ascension and glorification of Christ, and before the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit, and also before the gift of the book of Revelation sixty years afterwards. It is a text that cannot apply to the present time, because it cannot now be said that the Son does not know the day and hour of His own Advent.

It is true that at first the Apostles did not know the exact date of the Second Coming of the Saviour,⁵ however, from the time they were strengthened from on high at the descent of the Holy Spirit they were made aware of all.⁶ For, as the Saviour foretold, by the Holy Spirit all the mysteries were revealed: I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he [it], the Spirit of truth, is come, he [it] will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come.⁷ From the time of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the Apostles, as well as all faithful Christians, with the illumination and wisdom given them by the Holy Spirit, were made able to know all truth. In other words, they became aware of the entirety of the divine plan for the history of the world

¹ Mat 24:36

² Mat 24:36; Eadie, John, *The Illustrated National Comprehensive Family Bible, Special Limited Edition with the Commentaries of Scott and Henry*, p.948

³ Amos 3:7; Mat 24:32-43; John 15:15; II Peter 1:19; I Thes 4:4; the words *"It is not for you to know the times or seasons,"* were spoken only to the people of those days (cf. Acts 1:7).

⁴ Mark 13:32

⁵ Mat 24:36

⁶ an overstatement, surely, for Daniel prophesied that in *'the time of the end....knowledge shall be increased,'* Dan 12:4b

⁷ John 16:12,13

and its end, and thus were able to determine through Holy Scripture the events of the future, such as the date of the Second Coming. Isn't such a determination possible?⁸

An answer to this question may be found in the context of the wording used by Christ: *'But of that day and hour knoweth no man.'* When uttered, He was a mortal being in His voluntary state of humiliation, and, so, could be classed as part of *'man,'* from whom the Father, at that time, had denied foreknowledge, especially as it is virtually impossible to calculate the exact date of the Second Coming from the Old Testament alone. When later He ascended to heaven, He became restored to His former immortal state, and became privy to all things of the Father, as seen in, *'The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass,'*⁹ so His lack of foreknowledge on the matter was but temporary, restricted to His mortal life on earth.

Interestingly, if *'the angels of heaven'* don't know in advance the exact time of the Second Coming, then neither does Satan. It follows that Satan must have a steady stream of 'potential Antichrists' on tap over time, or certainly as events patently come near the time of the end, to ensure that when the time and opportunity does come with the restriction of the 'Restrainer,' at least one of them will be capable of stepping into the position. In addition, Satan is constantly attempting to kill God's people, and the flow of antichristian candidates is an aid to that endeavour, as Satan would see it. Even some nominally God's get in on this, as seen from, *'Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.'*¹⁰ It is also known that at the time of the end, even the families of the 'elect' will seek to persecute them, betraying and delivering them up to the most heinous, persecuting power in all of history—the revived, world-girdling Holy Roman Empire—for martyrdom.¹¹

Is evil forewarned, evil forearmed?

To put the question another way, can Satan avoid or negate a prophecy in Scripture simply by being forewarned and taking avoiding action? The 'track record' of the 'evil one' is telling: The ten world regions, prophesied over two and a half millennia ago,¹² is now under construction and well advanced in the process of coming forward. All Satan need do is to alter the number of regions and he'll have broken an unbreakable scriptural prophecy. Has he managed to do that? Of course not!

⁸ *Forty Coming Wonders*, p.4 (with added comment and clarification in square brackets)

⁹ Rev 1:1

¹⁰ John 5:18

¹¹ Mat 10:35,36

¹² Dan 7:23,24

Or what about the prophecies in Daniel which have happened exactly as prophesied? Some examples: The *'handwriting on the wall'* incident.¹³ Once Daniel had explained the meaning of the writing in the wet plaster wall, what happened? Nothing, perhaps? No! *'In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.'*¹⁴ Almost immediately, in that very night, Belshazzar was killed, his kingdom was ended, and the entire given to the Medes and, later, the Persians, exactly as prophesied.¹⁵ Or what about the various prophecies contained in Daniel chapter eleven?¹⁶ This is a detailed, prophetic listing of historically-verified events so utterly accurate that many believe it written after the events. All Satan needed to do was avoid one single part of it, but he couldn't!

So what of prophecies yet to happen? Consider but three:

1. The end-time Antichrist's 'false-peace' covenant with the Jews, is to last seven years.¹⁷ Why doesn't Satan subvert the prophecy and set it for a different duration, or have his man, the Antichrist, conclude the covenant early or late, or renege on it either early or late? The reason? He can't!
2. Or set up a different image in the Temple to that prophesied?¹⁸ or to set it up at a different time?¹⁹ The reason? He can't!
3. Or why not gather somewhere other than at Har Megiddo in the valley of Jezreel²⁰ in preparation for the final battle of the era?²¹ The answer? He can't!

The underlying reason is that while Satan always acts in type, seeking to destroy mankind, he acts in accordance with God's predeterminate will, and he cannot break that.

So what of the allegation²² that by promulgating the exact times and dates of certain critical events to come, Judaeo-Christians are giving Satan the opportunity to avoid them and to break the prophecies? This is God's answer: *'To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.'*²³ The word 'Season',²⁴ 'a set or appointed time,' is seen again in, *'for at the time appointed the end shall be.'*²⁵ In other words, there is a predetermined time for everything, which neither Satan, nor any demon, can break.

¹³ Dan 5:1-31

¹⁴ Dan 5:30

¹⁵ Dan 5:25-28

¹⁶ 11:1-32

¹⁷ Dan 9:27

¹⁸ Rev 13:13-15

¹⁹ Dan 9:27

²⁰ Armageddon; Rev 16:16

²¹ Rev 19:19

²² made by some self-professing Christians, no less! Laodicean era, predictably.

²³ Eccl 3:1

²⁴ Hebrew: z'man.

²⁵ Dan 8:19b

There is a question, however, of how much of the specific chronology and dates of the end-time is known to Satan and, presumably, at least, to some of his demons. Matthew records, *'And when he was come to the other side of the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God, art thou come hither to torment us before the time?'*²⁶ These demons knew something of the timescale, for they knew that His earthly ministry, almost two millennia ago, was too early for their torment, a torment which even they held to be certain. But does Satan know more than this? Does he know any real detail? There are some grounds to suppose that he does.

Demonically-inspired prophecies²⁷ given during the course of the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, concerning 'the three days of darkness' or 'the time of purification,'²⁸ have led some to the tentative conclusion that Satan has more than an inkling of the timetable of soon-coming cataclysmic events. 'Three days of darkness' is a remarkably constant theme to be found in many Marian and other demonic apparitions, inner locutions, and the like, with other prophecies linking it to the satanic view of the sixth seal of Revelation. While it may be little more than a presumed extrapolation from the penultimate plague of Egypt, prior to the Exodus, the stress placed upon it, and the frequency of repetition over two centuries, suggests that there may be more to it than that.²⁹

In order to dupe the greater part of mankind at the time of the end, it is essential to Satan that he determines correctly the duration of the sixth seal, for he seems to be vesting much in his accurate prediction of three days for his 'days of darkness.' If the duration is different from three days, presumably mankind will be a lot less likely to swallow his deception. In order to achieve maximum deception, complete accuracy in this will be needed. The perception of some is that he has done all this, and that he knows quite a lot about the time of the end. In other words, Satan and his demons not only know their end—in the lake of fire—but also approximately when it will happen.

²⁶ Mat 8:28,29

²⁷ such as those of Blessed Anna-Maria Taigi (19th-century, Italy) and Marie-Julie Jahenny of La Fraudais (19th-century, France), q.v. inf., and others.

²⁸ after which, it is claimed, there will be no 'ungodly' left on earth; 'ungodly' referring to those in opposition to Satan.

²⁹ since Satan appears to know the duration of the sixth seal, it is likely that he knows or has estimated the duration of the Day of the Lord. As he must be aware of the year of Christ's announcement of the Jubilee, in 27AD, given that it is recorded in the Bible; the import of the six days of the week on the basis of a day for a thousand years; the correct calendar (Satan having seen its operation and known the method of its calculation; indeed, to this day, he is responsible for the various perverted versions in circulation); he should have been able to project to 2027AD, calculate the correct number of days between Pentecost and Yom Teruah (109), roughly calculate and then refine the Day of the Lord to 700 days, and so be left with a residual three days for the sixth seal. If this be the case, and given the various prophecies relating to the time of the end, it is perhaps likely that he knows or suspects, to a considerable level, even approaching 'rather near certainty,' when Christ will return.

Ei me

*'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only,'*³⁰ in its English translation has two occurrences of the word *'but,'* but that is not how it appears in the original Greek. The first is correctly translated from the Greek de, which does mean *'but.'* The second, occurring in a verbless clause which is conditional—Greek verbless conditional clauses, like their Hebrew counterparts, are often very ambiguous when taken in isolation—is incorrect: ei me,³¹ is not *'but,'*³² despite its translation as such. Literally, it

³⁰ Mat 24:36

³¹ uses in the K.J.V. of ei me as *'except'*—the normal and more correct K.J.V. usage (also *'unless'*) it should be said (with added comment and clarification in square brackets):

Mat 19:9, *'And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [ei me] [or *'unless'*] it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.'* The exceptive case, legal under the Law, is that of putting away a wife for *'fornication,'* Greek: porneia, i.e., gross sexual perversity. In all other cases, it is unlawful to put away a wife.

Mat 24:22, *'And except [ei me] [or *'unless'*] those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened,'* and,

Mark 13:20, *'And except [ei me] [or *'unless'*] that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.'* The word *'sake'* should be deleted as it does not occur in the original Greek text, leaving *'but for the elect.'* The exceptive case is the *'elect,'* since their exposure to the Tribulation shall be shortened. And as a result of that exceptive case, others—but by no means all of mankind—shall be saved. That means that were there to be no *'elect'* at the end time, all flesh alive on earth would be destroyed by a rightfully vengeful God.

Mat 24:36, *'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but [ei me] [or *'unless'*] my Father only,'* and,

Mark 13:32, *'But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but [ei me] [or *'unless'*] the Father.'*

The knowledge of the time of the Second Coming is not exclusive. If it were, Greek: parektos, *'besides,'* or *'with the exception of,'* (Acts 26:29e), or ektos (I Cor 15:27c), or alla would have been used instead of ei me. Rather, it is restricted, the exceptive or *'unless'* case being those to whom the Father alone has condescended that knowledge (cp. Rom 7:7 below).

Luke 9:13, *'But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except [ei me] [or *'unless'*] we should go and buy meat for all this people.'* To the minds of the disciples, the exceptive case lay in going to purchase food for the multitude of five thousand people, without which the disciples could not perceive of them being fed.

John 9:33, *'If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.'* Here ei me is translated *'if....not'* [or *'unless'*]. The conditional and exceptive sense is patently evident here, for were it not that Jesus came from God, He could not act in the way He did, healing and performing miracles. Once again, and as ever in the New Testament, ei me is followed by acts or action.

John 13:8, *'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.'* Here ean me is translated *'if....not'* [or *'unless'*]. Again, the conditional and exceptive sense is patently evident here, for were it not for Jesus's washing Peter's feet, Peter would have had no part with The Lord. Again, and as ever in the New Testament, ean me is followed by an act or action.

John 14:2, *'In my Father's house there are many mansions [places to live]: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.'* This is in a slightly different form: ei de me, which means *'otherwise,'* or *'but if not.'* It is followed by the act of preparation, and thereafter, by a return to earth.

John 19:11, *'Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except [ei me] [or *'unless'*] it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin'* (the Syriac and Persic versions add *'than thine'*). The exceptive or exceptional case was the authority and power granted to Pilate by God, as part of His Divine plan, otherwise Pilate would have been powerless in the situation. Pilate did not have exclusive, unrestricted power. It was not exclusive; it was conditional, exceptive, and time-restricted. Pilate had been guilty of sin already, in allowing the Roman soldiers to abuse Christ, and in having Him scourged. *'He that delivered me hath the greater sin'* is a reference to Caiaphas, the chief priest, whose sin was of an altogether greater order of magnitude.

Rom 7:7, 'What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I have not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except [ei me] [or 'unless'] the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.' The exceptive case arises owing to the provisions of the Law, for, without the Law, sin would not be known. Unless the law had spoken, that special knowledge, the knowledge of sin, the transgression of the Law, would not have existed.

Rom 9:29, 'And as Esaias said before, except [ei me] [or 'unless'] the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and had been made like unto Gomorrha.' The action of the Lord of Hosts caused the exceptive or exceptional case. Israel was different: a different race, a different people, separated unto the Lord through the saving grace of God, and through His Son, without whom the Jews and other Israelites would have been as the most depraved of men. They would have been as Sodom unless the Lord had acted. The 'action' is in God's giving Christ to Israel. The Messiah is not the only one in the kingdom, exclusively; there will be many firstfruits, followed by the 'great multitude,' q.v. sup.

I Cor 7:5, 'Defraud ye not one the other, except [ei me ti: 'if not somewhat'] it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.' Sexual abstinence in marriage is the very exceptional case, and should not maintain for long. The separation is time-limited. It is restricted to parting by mutual agreement for prayer and fasting. The 'action' is the temporary consent. It is not permanent, and so it cannot be exclusive.

I Cor 14:5, 'I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except [ei me] [or 'unless'] he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.' The exceptive case is in interpreting foreign tongues spoken in the church, for, unless that were done, there could be no understanding.

I Cor 14:7, 'And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?' The distinction produces the exceptive or exceptions in sound; it is not, and cannot be exclusive.

I Cor 14:9, 'So likewise ye, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.' The exceptive or exception is found in that which is readily understood or comprehended.

I Cor 15:27, 'For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he said all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted [ektos], which did put all things under him.' The specifically singular and blatantly obvious exception is He who did the act: the Father. All things are under the feet of the Son, put there by the word and power of the Father. But the Father cannot be put under the feet of the Son. This is an exclusive, and not an exceptive case. As such, ei me cannot be used, and ektos is substituted. Nothing could be clearer in this.

II Cor 12:13, 'For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except [ei me] [or 'unless'] it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.' The exceptive or exception in the case of the church at Corinth lay in their refusal to give Paul the then customary church welcome, support, and keeping, with the result that he worked to pay his own way, but that did not apply to other churches; the Corinth church was 'inferior' to other churches in that burdensome regard, but not in other matters. The exceptive case is in the church's inferiority, not in Paul's personally supporting himself through work. There is no hint of exclusivity here, however, as it is framed as a question, leaving open the possibility of others.

II Cor 13:5, 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus is in you, except [ei me ti: 'if not somewhat'] ye be reprobates.' The exceptive or exceptional case lay if they were, to an extent, self-deluding reprobates, in which case they would not really know whether Jesus dwelt in them or not.

Other New Testament texts using ei me or its variants (ean me, etc.), translated as 'except' and 'unless' (with added comment and clarification in square brackets):

Mat 5:20, 'For I say unto you, That except [ean me] [or 'unless'] your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' The exceptional are those whose righteousness is great. Only they shall enter the kingdom. The 'action' is in acquiring righteousness greater than the scribes and Pharisees. It is open to many, but few really achieve it, q.v. Mat 22:14.

Mat 11:27, 'No man knoweth the Son ei me the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save [Greek: ei me] [or 'unless' through] the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' Many do know the Son, by permission of the Father (cp. John 6:44), and many know the Father by dint of the work of the Son; both are exceptive cases. The appropriate 'actions' are those of the Father and the Son, leading to the enlightenment of supplicants.

Mat 12:29, 'Or else, how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house.' The exceptions are the one or ones that can overpower the strong man of the house. The 'action' is the binding.

Mat 18:3, 'And said, Verily I say unto you, Except [ean me] [or 'unless'] ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' The exceptions are those converting, becoming as little children, which is the 'action.'

Mat 19:9, 'And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [ei me] [or 'unless'] it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.' Only those whose wives have been put away or divorced for porneia, (gross sexual misconduct), can remarry under the Law. The 'action' is the putting away in accordance with the Law.

Mat 24:22, 'And except [ei me] [or 'unless'] those days [of the Tribulation] should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days should be shortened.' The word 'sake' should be deleted as it does not occur in the original Greek text, leaving 'but for the elect.' The exception, the 'elect,' suffer but part of the total duration of the Tribulation. The rest go through the entire, if they survive at all in many cases. The 'action' lies in the shortening.

Mat 26:42, 'He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] I drink it, thy will be done.' The exceptional case was Christ's drinking the cup, for it was the Father's will that He do so. The alternative of not drinking it could not and would not bear any fruit. The 'action' is drinking.

Mark 3:27, 'No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.' The exceptional are the one or ones that can overpower the strong man of the house. The 'action' is the binding.

Mark 7:3,4, 'For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of their elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.' Unless they washed their hands and utensils and tables, they would not eat, a tradition received from their fathers, but it was not always so: exceptive case. The 'action' is the washings of hands.

Luke 5:21, 'And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but [ei me] God alone?' At first pass, this appears exclusive, but Christ gave the answer in vv.22-26, wherein He showed them that He the power both to forgive sins and to heal the man in a bed, taken with palsy (v.18a), therefore it was not exclusive to the God in heaven.

Luke 9:13, 'But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more than five loaves and two fishes; except [ei me] [or 'unless'] we should go and buy meat for all this people.' To their mind, unless the disciples went and purchased food, they would not be able to feed the multitude, given the meagre resources available to them: exceptive case. The 'action' is in going to buy provisions.

Luke 10:22, 'All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and him to whom the Son will reveal him'—cp. Mat 11:27 sup.—with some continuing to contend that the use of the word 'but,' from ei me, should read 'but exclusively.' Given this, it is then claimed that the specific addition of those to whom the Father would be revealed by the Son destroys the argument brought out in the excerpts above. The argument is that if Mat 24:36 were not exclusive, then there would be no need to mention them. But there is something very obviously wrong with that interpretation and understanding—and that is beyond it constituting almost an argument from silence, q.v. inf.—for, in bare bones, it appears to state that only the Father can know the Son, and the Son the Father. If that be so, then how could any third party know the Son and, through Him, the Father? If it be so restricted, it is utterly self-defeating and incongruous. In any event, an argument from silence, as appealing as it may be, really is, in this instance, a logical fallacy, which reasons that a lack of evidence is evidence. In v.22, if the word 'except' or 'unless' be inserted for 'but,' it tends to bolster the alternative position, however, for it clearly shows that there are more than two who know the Father and Son, for the others in human terms comprise those 'to whom the Son will reveal' (neither of the K.J.V.'s double use of the word 'him' in that concluding phrase appears in the original Greek). So this does not exclude all mankind, but only those chosen by the Son (i.e., 'those to whom the Son will reveal [it]') are to receive the knowledge of the Father and the Son.

There is more to this, however, for the concluding phrase, 'and him to whom the Son will reveal him,' contains not a normal catenating or linking / copulative or joining 'and,' but an epexegetic 'and.' The explanatory epexegetis means 'by that is meant' or 'that is,' rather than the simple 'and.' (A similar construction is found in Rev 2:2, 'I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience,' which has, as the first 'and,' the epexegetic usage, and so should read: 'I know thy works; that is I mean, thy labour, and thy patience'). This removes any idea of exclusive duality in the concluding phrases of Luke 10:22 and, as a consequence, of any idea of exclusive singularity in Mat 24:36 and the corresponding Mark 13:32.

Thus Luke 10:22 should read: 'All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, except [by the condescendence and action of] the Father; and who the Father is, except [by the condescendence and action of] the Son, by that is meant he [the 'no man' in the opening phrase] to whom the Son will reveal Him.'

It is patently obvious that the knowledge of each other in Luke 10:22 could never be restricted to the dyadic Godhead. Angels know, and have known, since their creation, both divine beings in the Godhead, although they do not fall under the classification of 'human.' The 'elect' know both the Son and through Him, the Father, and have known them since receipt of the Holy Spirit. Eventually, indeed, vast numbers of people will know. The bar imported by ei me is not exclusive to the Godhead, and that parallels the position of Mat 24:36 and Mark 13:32, where the text most emphatically does not exclude all men from knowledge of the day and hour, but for the moment, only the 'elect' can discern the day and hour.

The corresponding verse in Matthew is Mat 11:27, '*All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither know any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*' Again, both uses of 'he' in the concluding stich do not appear in the original Greek. 'But' and 'save' derive from the same Greek ei me. This is virtually identical to the text of Luke 10:22.

The account by Matthew continues with Mat 24:37-39, '*But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark. And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*'

The Old Testament account of Noah's forewarning is given in Gen 7:4a, '*For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights.*' Noah knew the exact day of the start of the flood. Likewise, at the time of the end, God's 'elect' will know exactly the time of the Second Coming, this time well in advance of its happening, albeit with that knowledge restricted to the generation that is to experience it: Mat 24:34, '*Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.*'

The bulk of mankind will not know when these things shall be, but the few, God's 'elect,' will know, and know in considerable detail, for they are commanded to '*be awake*' and '*pay careful attention*' (v.33 agrypneo and v.35 gregoreo respectively) on that day, q.v. Mark 13:35-37.

There is one further consideration. Christ knew the exact time of His commencing His ministry (Day of Atonement in a Jubilee year). He knew the Scriptures better than anyone, so He knew of the day-for-a-thousand years principle given in Psalms. Moreover, He would have known of the true import and implication of the feast of Weeks or Firstfruits (later called Pentecost) and that of the feast of Trumpets. It follows that He must have known not only the detail of the end-times given in His prophecy on leaving the Temple recorded in Matthew chapt. 24 but also the dates of the Second Coming and the times, for the latter are actually stated in a somewhat cryptic or embedded form in His prophecies in Matthew chaps. 24 and 25, q.v. It is inconceivable that He was ignorant of that further, detailed knowledge.

Luke 17:18, '*There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.*' Ei me is here translated 'save,' similar to 'except.' Of the ten lepers healed, only one returned to give glory to God. The exception was the one who returned. All were equally healed, so the absolute self-exclusion of the others was in regard to their non-returning; their walking away; their action.

Now to Mat 24:36, the conditional bar in the Greek language excludes not all men and angels—in other words it is not absolute—but the exclusion is moderated, pertaining to the human possession of specific knowledge of a future event, knowledge which can only be obtained by the express condescendence of the Father—'*unless by [the condescendence of] the Father alone*'—and through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

The prefatory listing, when taken with Mark 13:32, includes the human, the angelic, and the Divine ('*the Son*'), and it is inconceivable that Christ was in ignorance, as explained above. Therefore, there is no absolute, all-pervading, insurmountable bar on possession of that knowledge.

Luke 13:3, '*I tell you, Nay: but [de], except [ean me] ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*' Repentance was the exceptional case. Without that, they perished. The 'action' is repenting.

John 3:2, '*The same [Nicodemus] came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] God be with him.*'

Unless God was with Jesus, He would be powerless in these matters: exceptive case. The 'action' lies in God's indwelling. It was not exclusive in Nicodemus's eyes, for many had done miracles from God, as recorded in Scripture.

John 3:3, '*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except [ean me] [or 'unless'] a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*' To be born of the spirit, i.e., born again, is the exceptive case. Unless that be, a man cannot see the kingdom of God. The 'action' is in being born again, q.v. More than one, obviously, is born again.

John 3:5, '*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except [ean me] [or 'unless'] a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*' To be born of the spirit, i.e., born again, is the exceptive case. Unless that be, a man cannot enter the kingdom of God. The 'action' is in being born again, q.v. More than one, obviously, is born again.

John 3:13, '*And no man [oudeis, 'nothing' or 'no one'] hath ascended up to heaven, except [ei me] he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*' The 'action' is His coming down from heaven. This is the only text

that appears, at first pass, wholly exclusive and yet it does not have the Greek: parektos, ektos, or alla. All becomes explainable, however, when the other persons who have done so are considered: The Father (cf. Gen 15:17 and inf.), and a variety of angels. If the atmospheric heaven is also held to be in purview, then the consideration widens, for the 'elect' alive and the dead in Christ will rise 'in the air,' and then return to the earth from that lower heaven. In going forth to meet the returning Saviour, there is seen a low mirror of Christ's earlier ascension to the Father and His returning to meet them 'in the air.'

John 3:27, 'John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] it be given him from above.' Unless God grants it, it will not come to pass. It is a matter of God's condescendence: exceptive case. The 'action' is in God's giving.

John 4:48, 'Then Jesus said unto him, Except [ean me] [or 'unless'] ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.' Unless signs and wonders accompanied Jesus, the people would not believe His words: exceptive case. The 'action' is in seeing them. There were other signs and wonders too, so it is not an exclusive case.

John 6:44, 'No man come to me, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.' Unless the Father decrees it, no man comes to Christ: exceptive case. The 'action' is the Father's drawing.

John 6:53, 'Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except [ean me] [or 'unless'] ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.' Unless a man keeps the Passover, in the form of The Last Supper, he is lost: exceptive case. Any other form is invalid. The 'action' is keeping Passover, q.v.

John 12:24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except [ean me] [or 'unless'] a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but [de] if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' Germination in the soil is necessary for growth and fruits, for without that, nothing: exceptive case. Any other device is worthless. The 'action' is falling.

John 15:4, 'Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.' Unless we live in Christ, we cannot bear fruit: exceptive case. The 'action' is abiding and living in the vine, and bearing fruit, expanded in vv.10-13 as keeping the commandments and loving one's fellow man.

John 20:25, 'The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he [Thomas Didymus] said unto them, Except [ean me] [or 'unless'] I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.' Physical experience of the risen Christ was necessary for Thomas, without which he would not believe that He had risen from the grave. Others had seen Him, with His wounds, so Philip wanted to too: exceptive case. The 'action' is touching and seeing.

Acts 8:31, 'And he said, How can I, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.' The Ethiopian eunuch could not understand the Scriptures without guidance from someone: exceptive case. The 'action' is guiding. Philip was not the only person who could have guided him through the scriptures.

Acts 27:31, 'Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, Except [ean me] [or 'unless'] these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.' The exceptive case, for survival, lay in remaining with the ship. The 'action' is staying on board during the storm; they would not remain on board indefinitely.

Rom 7:7, 'What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law for I had not known lust, except [ei me] [or 'unless'] the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.' The law introduces the exceptive case, bringing knowledge of sin. There are many Laws, and many sins, and 'lust' is not the only or exclusive sin.

Rom 10:15, 'And how shall they preach, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!' They, who are many, must be sent by God to preach the gospel, for all other preaching is worthless: exceptive case. The 'action' is their being sent by God.

I Cor 14:5-9, 'I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. Now brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] I shall speak to you by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air.' Unless words spoken in a foreign tongue are interpreted, they are worthless: exceptive case. The quadripartite 'actions' involve speaking and interpreting.

I Cor 15:2, 'By which [gospel] also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory that which I preached unto you, unless [ean me] ye have believed in vain.' The exceptional case to being saved by the preaching of the gospel is those that have heard it in vain, for they are lost. The 'action' is believing in vain.

means 'if not.' It was translated into Latin by Jerome in the fourth-century Vulgate³³ as nisi, which means 'unless' (or in K.J.V. English 'except,' which meant 'unless' at the time). This provides a much more reliable and accurate translation.

In Greek, the verse has as its protasis—the subordinate or dependent clause expressing the outcome or conclusion—the opening statement: *'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of*

I Cor 15:36, *'Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] it die.'* Unless the grain dies, it will not germinate and bring forth fruit. It can fall elsewhere, but for germination proper, soil is needed. The 'action' is the death.

II Cor 13:5, *'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except [ei me] [or 'unless'] ye be reprobates?'* Their faith was of Christ, unless they were reprobate, the exceptional case. The 'action' is being reprobate.

II Thes 2:3, *'Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the 'day of Christ'] shall not come, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.'* Unless there is a falling away from the true faith and the coming of the Antichrist, the day of the Lord shall not yet come: conditional case. There are many instances of this, but one principle one. The 'action' is a falling away from the truth and proper belief and conduct.

II Tim 2:5, *'And if a man also strive for masteries, yet he is not crowned, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] he strive lawfully.'* That striving must be lawful: exceptive case. The 'action' is lawful striving.

Rev 2:5, *'Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] thou repent.'* Repentance or perdition. Without repentance, perdition: exceptive case. The 'action' is repenting, conditional or provisional in context.

Rev 2:22, *'Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except [ean me] [or 'unless'] they repent of their deeds.'* Repentance or tribulation. Without repentance, tribulation: exceptive case. The 'action' is repenting, again, conditional or provisional in context.

There are notable and telling exceptions:

I Cor 15:27, *'For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he said all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted [ektos], which did put all things under him.'*

The specifically singular and blatantly obvious exception is He who did the act: the Father. All things are under the feet of the Son, put there by the word and power of the Father. But the Father cannot be put under the feet of the Son. This is an exclusive, and not an exceptive case. As such, ei me cannot be used, and ektos is substituted [this reproduced, q.v. sup.].

Acts 26:29, *'And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except [parektos] these bonds.'*

And the word translated 'except,' parektos, meaning 'with the exception of.....', 'except,' 'besides,' would be the obvious choice in Mat 24:36 and Mark 13:32 if the intention were to isolate the Father in terms of that knowledge. But that wasn't the phrase used, it was ei me, or ean me, and that imports a very different meaning.

Robertson, A. T., *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 47; the great Baptist scholar, when commenting on Mat 5:32, made the following comments:

"Saving for the cause of fornication (parektos logou porneias). An unusual phrase that perhaps means 'except for a matter of unchastity.' 'Except on the ground of unchastity' (Weymouth), 'except unfaithfulness' (Goodspeed), and is equivalent to me epi porneiai in Mat 19:9."

And there it is again -- parektos -- except, saving, besides.

It follows that Mat 24:36 and Mark 13:32 must involve action by the party mentioned: God the Father. He cannot sit unmoved and deny that knowledge to all and sundry. Rather, He divulges it—the 'action' in this case—to those to whom He condescends be apprised, viz., His 'elect.'

Further, if the intent of Mat 24:36 and Mark 13:32 were hard-and-fast exclusion, in that only the Father does and can know, then the Greek would not have been ei me, but parektos, meaning 'except' or 'besides,' or alla, meaning 'but' in the sense of an exception or something to the contrary, a contradistinction (e.g. Acts 2:16 and almost all other instances in the New Testament of the derivation of the English word 'but').

³² the similarly sounding Greek: ou me means 'never' or 'not,' or 'not at all,' as seen in Mat 24:34's 'not' in *'this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.'* Ou me is the strongest form of negative in the Greek language, and is thus unrelated to the conditional ei me.

³³ deriving from Latin: vulgus, 'the common people.'

heaven,³⁴ and, as its apodosis—the main clause of a conditional statement expressing or identifying the regulator, moderator, or conditioning aspect—‘*but my Father only*.³⁵ In pre-eminently true conditionals, the protasis does not contain something that is exclusively true, but states something that is pre-eminently true, but with an exception or exceptions subject to one or more conditions.³⁶ This approach yields the correct meaning, for without the condescendence and prior approval of the Father, detailed knowledge of the ‘*day and hour*’ of the Second Coming ‘*in the air*’³⁷ is not possible. It follows that only God’s ‘elect’ are capable of understanding and acting properly on Christ’s words recorded here.

Had Christ in Matthew wished to record the complete exclusion of knowledge of ‘*the day and hour*’ to the Father alone, then He would not have adopted the phrase ei me; he would have used the Greek paraketos, which means ‘*besides*’ (or possibly the Greek: alla, which means ‘*but*’), which would have imported complete exclusion in favour of the following named party, the Father. That is the word used by Christ on what the K.J.V. translates as ‘*fornication*.’³⁸ ‘*That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication*,³⁹ has a clear exclusion of one thing: porneia. The word ‘*saving*’ is from paraketos and imports an absolute exclusion. Had the same been in the mind of Christ in relation to knowledge of ‘*that day and hour*,’⁴⁰ to give the sense that uniquely and exclusively, denying it to all others, at all times, the Father solely has knowledge of that day and time, then He would have used paraketos to indicate an impenetrable division through which that knowledge could not pass. But He didn’t,⁴¹ because that knowledge is available, subject to the gracious condescendence of the Father. Without that condescendence, it is absolutely impossible to discern the time and date from Scripture.⁴²

³⁴ Mat 24:36a

³⁵ Mat 24:36b

³⁶ with these kinds of conditionals, a dynamic equivalent or periphrastic translation is often necessary to bring out the pre-eminently true sense of the conditionals. There are twenty-seven instances of this type of conditional sentence in the New Testament, including Mat 11:27,12:39,13:57,15:24,16:4; Mark 6:4; Luke 11:29; John 3:13,10:10; Rom 7:7,13:8; 1 Cor 1:14,2:2,12:3,5, 13; Gal 1:7; Eph 4:8; 1 John 2:22; Rev 2:17,14:3,19:12; cf. Bible.org. article *Textual Problem, Matthew 24:36*; Hagner, Donald A., *Matthew 1–13*, p.320; Morris, Leon, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, pp.293,294; Nolland, John, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, pp.273-275; Baima, J. K., *Making Valid Conclusions from Greek Conditional Sentences*, pp.64,65.

³⁷ Greek: ekeinos, ‘*that*,’ refers to the day in which the ‘elect’ are gathered from the earth; cf. Mat 24:31

³⁸ Greek: porneia.

³⁹ Mat 5:32a

⁴⁰ Mat 24:36a

⁴¹ the latter, Greek: alla, is the word he used in a verse earlier in the same chapter, where it is translated ‘*but*’ in the K.J.V.: Mat 24:6, ‘*And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*’ Here the exclusion is absolute, but time-limited: intervening wars and rumours of wars neither impact on, nor constitute, the cataclysmic wars at the time of the end, but they are wars, nevertheless, and they are part of the continuum of warfare culminating in the events of the time of the end.

⁴² in English, the preposition *except* means ‘*other than*’ or ‘*apart from*,’ and, when used as a conjunction, is an archaic word for *unless* (derived from Old French: excepter, ‘*to leave out*,’ from Latin: exipere, ‘*to take out*.’). It denotes the abnormal, the irregular, the deviation, the departure, the peculiar, the anomalous, the uncommon, the extraordinary; something not in conformity with the general rule or principle. As a verb it can mean *exclude*, and as a noun, *exclusion*. The modern English reader, scanning over the words in question, has a tendency to interpret the ‘subordinating’

Turner arrives at the same conclusion on the conditional use of the ei me clause: the words mean, literally, 'if not,' and have the effect of negating the previous clause with a special case. Discussing a verse in Luke, ⁴³ he says: 'It states: 'And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?' In this passage in Luke you have a similar set-up, where the discussion is centered around something only God can do! There was never any question about monotheism!....Nevertheless, in Greek, the last phrase of Luke 5:21 appear as thus: 'ei me monos ho theos;' literally "Except only God?" Hence the Greek indicative "ei," and the Greek subjunctive particle "me," together form an idiom that means, "except / unless." However, in this case better English is "but." However, the point is, you have the adjective "monos" functioning as an adverb just like [in] John⁴⁴ even though the sentence structure is different. The point is still the same because both contexts are discussing entities that are limited to God's discretion.⁴⁵ In addition, inspection of the texts utilizing ei me and ean me shows that the phrase is followed by an action (past, present, or future), or the implication of an action.

Collett notes a further consideration in relation to the apparent restriction of foreknowledge: 'It ought to be more widely known that the Greek, translated "but," consists of two words, the simple English of which is "if not"—thus ei meaning "if," and me, meaning "not."⁴⁶ The late Archbishop Trench, one of the greatest authorities on words, when lecturing at a London college, called attention to this about one hundred years ago; and it can be seen by anyone by reference to a good Greek lexicon. So that the clause⁴⁷ should read—"nor the Son, if not the Father."⁴⁸

Again, this implies the possibility that foreknowledge can be granted to others by the Father at His will, through the Holy Spirit, that is, 'save through my Father' —'take ye heed, watch, and pray' being the given way

conjunction as a verb or a preposition, rather than the archaic form *unless*. Indeed, *if*, found in ei me, '*not if*,' is a subordinating conjunction, and as such supportive of the conditional archaic reading.

The K.J.V.'s translation of the two verses' exceptive case, stating that only the Father knows, to the exclusion of all others, at all times, is grossly misleading. The use of ei me, or ean me, literally '*not if*,' may seem a strange conjunction to some in English: a negative immediately followed by a conditional conjunction, but that shouldn't be too hard to comprehend. A 'negative unless' is a straightforward construction. When translated '*unless*,' it correctly denotes the exceptional case. In fact, this separates or distinguishes 'with the condescendence' and 'without the condescendence' of the Father. Without that condescendence, it is absolutely impossible to discern the time from Scripture. Accordingly, the typical case is that the overwhelming mass of mankind is not in possession of that knowledge. Neither would they seek to know it, nor, indeed, would they have any interest in it.

The reference to future tense is interesting, for it could be argued that the tense of both verses should be future, lending credence to the divine condescendence interpretation through distinguishing the disciples then being spoken to, who did not know, from some, coming later, who would. But the use of the present tense is used to include those then present, who could neither fathom the dates (for all information had not been given at that time, especially that contained in the book of Revelation) nor live until the time of the Second Coming.

⁴³ Luke 5:21

⁴⁴ John 5:44

⁴⁵ Nigel Turner (with added comment and clarification in square brackets; sublinear emphasis added)

⁴⁶ appearing in Mat 24:36; Mark 13:32,33; 'but,' in Greek, is de.

⁴⁷ Mark 13:32c

⁴⁸ Collett, Sidney, *The Scripture of Truth* (slightly paraphrased)

of securing it. Under these circumstances, the concluding word of Matthew's foundation verse,⁴⁹ *'only,'*⁵⁰ would refer to the sole provenance of such divine information—God the Father—and not to His uniquely possessing and retaining foreknowledge of the time of the Parousia. Such an interpretation, both credible and compelling, puts a completely different complexion on the matter, and opens up the prospect of divine propositional revelation concerning the time of the Second Coming.

Chronology

Chronologically, the first record of Jesus giving any indication of the time of day of the Second Coming *'in the air'* is in Luke: *'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.'*⁵¹ *And if he*⁵² *shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.'*⁵³ Peter then immediately queries, *'Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?'*⁵⁴ He was seeking to ascertain whether the statement refers to the disciples only, or to all. Jesus' answer makes it clear that it is directed to all, for it makes specific reference to the time of His return and conditions pertaining. But even more, it describes the actions and status of the then three classes of *'servant'*:

1. The faithful and wise steward;⁵⁵
2. The bad and completely rescidivist servant, who ultimately goes to perdition; and,
3. The slipshod and unprepared servant, who, depending upon his state, will receive more or less punishment.

The responses to the Lord's command to *'stay awake with loins girt'* will be varied, and an essential cause of this variance is to be found in the detail of the individual's waiting and expectation of His return and in his associated actions. The *'elect'* will be awake, ritually cleansed by washing—for he will, after all, be rising, immortal, to meet the Lord in His immortal, all-powerful state—and waiting, ready to go, for only the *'elect'* can understand the significance of the Scriptures and discern the date and time of His return, and only the *'elect'* will

⁴⁹ Mat 24:36

⁵⁰ Greek: *monos*, *'remaining,' 'alone,'* or *'singly.'*

⁵¹ i.e., inside a house, and dressed and girded, ready; *'lights burning'* suggests a nocturnal return, with those waiting doing so indoors; *'loins girded,'* signifies being dressed and ready for that journey.

⁵² viz., the bridegroom, signifying Christ.

⁵³ Luke 12:35-40; esp. vv.35,38,40

⁵⁴ Luke 12: 41b

⁵⁵ or *'trusty and thoughtful,'* as Moffatt has it.

keep that appointment.⁵⁶ The 'intermediate peoples' will still be asleep or at work. Their removal to be with the Lord will not occur until later, after the time of Christ's alighting on the mount of Olives.⁵⁷

Both Matthew and Luke speak of night 'watches.' *'Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.'*⁵⁸ Mark speaks of the Parousia of being either, 'at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning'⁵⁹—in other words, he mentions the same watch system. Whilst the earliest Greeks divided the night commonly into three parts, and, prior to the exile in Babylon, the Israelites had three watches in a night, after they became subject to the Romans they adopted the Roman custom of dividing the night into four watches. The second watch, therefore, ran from nine o'clock to midnight, and the third watch from midnight to three o'clock.

*'Behold, I come as a thief,*⁶⁰ *Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments,*⁶¹ *lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.'*⁶² There is, perhaps, more than a passing connection to the wedding feast 'in the air,' where the lack of a wedding garment⁶³ results in eviction, figuratively, from God's 'elect' people 'into outer darkness.'⁶⁴

There is, certainly, a very close correlation with the Second Coming, in staying awake and watching for that blessed event, seen in the following by Edersheim: '[I]n the midst of some dry account⁶⁵ of what went on in the Temple, we come upon the very words which....John has employed to describe heavenly realities.⁶⁶ Perhaps one of the most striking instances of this kind is afforded by the words....' *'Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.'* They literally describe, as we learn from the Rabbis, the punishment awarded to the Temple guards if found asleep at their posts; and the Rabbinical account of it is curiously confirmed by the somewhat naïve confession of one of their number,⁶⁷ that on a certain occasion his own maternal uncle had actually undergone the punishment of having his clothes set on fire by the captain of the Temple as he went his rounds at night.⁶⁸

⁵⁶ q.v. inf.

⁵⁷ q.v. Luke 17:34-36, et. sup.

⁵⁸ Luke 12:37,38

⁵⁹ Mark 13:35b

⁶⁰ Greek: kleptes, 'embezzler' or 'pilferer.'

⁶¹ Greek: himation, the outer 'cloak,' the more expensive outer garment worn over the tunic.

⁶² Rev 16:15

⁶³ Mat 22:12

⁶⁴ Mat 22:13c

⁶⁵ by Josephus.

⁶⁶ in Rev 16:15

⁶⁷ footnoted: Rabbi Elieser ben Jacob, q.v. Middoth, i, 2.

⁶⁸ Edersheim, Alfred, *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services as they were at the time of Jesus Christ*, pp.142,143 (with added comment and clarification in square brackets).

Now *'Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not'*⁶⁹ would fit midnight, at the changeover of watches, most admirably. That would be the precise point of the least level of watchfulness when the guards' attention would be diverted by the changeover. The twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew runs on from the preceding one—there being no chapter divisions in the original Greek—with the parable of the ten virgins,⁷⁰ which contains: *'And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom⁷¹ cometh; go ye out to meet him.'*⁷² *'Midnight'* is translated from two Greek words⁷³ meaning *'the middle of the night,'* or *'in the midst of the night.'* Midnight, therefore, the least watchful of night times, would be the least expected, and hence the soundest translation. But midnight is not quite so simple to determine. On the day in question⁷⁴ true midnight actually occurs at 00:39 I.D.S.T.⁷⁵—owing to Cairo time being the time zone for Jerusalem,⁷⁶ and therefore slightly 'out of phase' for the exact time coordinates for the longitude and latitude of the Holy City; there's also a one-hour adjustment necessary for I.D.S.T. —or 21:39 U.T.C.⁷⁷ on the day before, if using the Julian / Gregorian calendar.

In the middle of the night—Jerusalem time, for all things are taken relative to that pertaining at the Temple, or its site, in Jerusalem—Jesus Christ will come for His 'elect.'⁷⁸ The sheer physical impossibility of the 'elect' then alive maintaining a watch on a 24 / 7 basis implies that the actual date and time is both know-able and known in advance. Being found naked in the Temple as a result of having one's clothes burned off meant but one thing: a hasty flight out of the Temple precinct in shame. Similarly, those who sleep and slumber on the great day of the return of the Lord will have no place at the glorious wedding supper in the air.

The position of the disciples on the issue of the timing of the Second Coming after the Resurrection of Jesus is interesting. It is seen in Acts: *'When they were therefore come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.'*⁷⁹ The fact that they asked concerning the potential imminence of the kingdom is supportive of the exceptive nature of the Greek⁸⁰ in the context of the

⁶⁹ Luke 12:40

⁷⁰ ten being the biblical number of God's divine order and also of completed course of time; five (here in two groupings) in biblical useage can indicate judgement or reward.

⁷¹ signifying Christ.

⁷² Mat 25:6

⁷³ Greek: mesos nux.

⁷⁴ Sunday, 13 June, 2027, q.v.

⁷⁵ Israel Daylight Saving Time.

⁷⁶ q.v.; an alternative to the location-specific adjusted, clock midnight method of calculation, based on the mid-point (midnight) between Jerusalem sunset on 12 June, 2027 and sunrise on 13 June, 2027 (19:45 and 05:33 I.D.S.T. respectively), gives the same result: 00:39 I.D.S.T.

⁷⁷ Coordinated Universal Time.

⁷⁸ thus while the era of the Judæo-Christian Church started on Pentecost 30AD (with the receipt of the Holy Spirit on those gathered in Jerusalem), Christ returns for His own, the firstfruits of the church, also on Pentecost, in 2027AD.

⁷⁹ Acts 1:6,7

⁸⁰ Greek: ei me.

foundation verses in Matthew and Mark,⁸¹ for if such knowledge had been wholly proscribed, then there would have been no point in their asking, for they or their successors would only know when it had actually happened. The Greek used by Christ for 'times'⁸² designates a space of time rather than an identifiable point in time for a fixed or special occasion,⁸³ and thus points well into the future, whereas the word translated 'seasons'⁸⁴ in context refers to specific events at the end of the period of time.⁸⁵ Moffatt has, '*It is not for you to know the course and periods of time that the Father has fixed by his own authority.*'⁸⁶ The 'sole' or exclusive element in all of this is the setting of the dates for the events surrounding the Second Coming, et al., '*which the Father hath set in his own power of choice.*'⁸⁷ While the knowledge of those dates is restricted to those to whom the Father chooses to reveal it, it would have been of no utility to the apostles—for they would all die in due course, well short of the period of time in question—and, in any event, the Holy Spirit had not yet been conferred.⁸⁸ Hence, possession of that knowledge is exceptive and not exclusive, all working through the operation of the Will or Power of God, the Holy Spirit.

If this additional inference is correct, then Christ's words, '*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only,*'⁸⁹ were time specific, meeting the question when asked with a description of the then extant condition, but not referring to conditions extant when Paul wrote the Epistles, or John the book of Revelation, or eschatologically to near the time of the end.⁹⁰

Doubtless, there will be other means of anticipating the time of arrival of our Lord, as long-prophesied, dread events unfold, so then there should not be scope for any lingering dubiety or uncertainty.

⁸¹ Mat 24:36; Mark 13:32

⁸² Greek: chromos.

⁸³ as opposed to Greek: kairos, which does refer to a specific occasion / point in time.

⁸⁴ Greek: kairos.

⁸⁵ Greek: chromos.

⁸⁶ Acts 1:7b

⁸⁷ corrected translation of Acts 1:7c; Greek: exousia, '*power of choice.*'

⁸⁸ conferred later that same year, at Pentecost, 30AD.

⁸⁹ Mat 24:36

⁹⁰ Tanakh's Zech 14:7b, '*only the Lord knows when,*' does not agree with other translations, such as Moffatt's: '*The Eternal knows it.*'