

Timing Makes a Difference by Carl McMurray

Every once in awhile someone says something to me about Jesus not knowing when the end of the world is coming. I know they're getting this from Matthew 24:36 and I believe He was speaking about when the destruction of Jerusalem was to be, rather than the end of the world. But that's beside my point. When Jesus said this He was living life on the earth as a man. When He said this He had already "emptied" Himself, according to Philippians 2:7. He surely didn't know this fact when He was living as a man, but shall we say that He wasn't "let in on the secret" once He ascended to the right hand of God. Surely He knew than when Jerusalem was going to reach its tragic end. The timing of the statement makes all the difference in understanding it. When He was on the earth speaking, He did not know. But later He surely would have.

Another example of time being a factor in understanding the Scriptures is found in John 4:24. Deity is a spirit, we learn there. Yet, after the ascension of Jesus the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write in Colossians 2:9 that all the fullness of Deity dwelt within Jesus in bodily form. Deity has a body! Is this a contradiction? Not at all. When Jesus ascended into the heavens He took His resurrected body with Him. It was a changed, immortal body. Perhaps it is the kind that we look forward to having, i.e. 1 John 3:2. Before Jesus came to earth, as Deity He was a spirit being also. But after His incarnation He is different from the Father and the Spirit. He is still Deity, but He possesses a body. The timing of the statement makes all the difference.

A third and last expression of this is found in the covenant given to Moses on Sinai for Israel. At one time that covenant, the Law and the Prophets, was taught and held to, even by Jesus Himself. However that covenant was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14) and a new covenant instituted with new promises, Hebrews 8:6-7. Jesus took away the first covenant in order to establish the second, Hebrews 10:9. At one time the Law written on tables of stone would have been THE standard on going to heaven. That was exactly what Jesus told the rich young ruler to follow. However, now that Law is finished and Jesus has ratified a new covenant with His own blood. Now we look to the new covenant, or new testament of Jesus Christ as THE standard on how to get to heaven. No apostle ever told anyone to keep the ten commandments to be saved. Time makes all the difference.