

Is God *ADDING* 15 Years till the Coming of Christ?

For millennia men have speculated on the date when the Messiah will come! Previous ideas have proven to be wrong, time and time again! But the Scriptures indicate God is working out a 6,000 year program on the earth. Yet 6,000 years have passed since the creation of Adam. The time “expired” in 1997, and the Messiah has not yet returned. What happened? Does a little known prophecy and historical account contain the answer?

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Predictions of the coming of the Messiah have been made for thousands of years, and they have proven to be in error time and time again. William Miller predicted it in 1844. The Jehovah’s Witnesses predicted it in 1914, and when He did not come, they changed the prediction to an invisible coming, claiming that He is now “ruling in the midst of His enemies.”

Herbert W. Armstrong predicted the second coming in 1975, saying bombastically that the church would flee to Petra to a place of safety in 1972. No such thing happened, so he later wrote “I have never claimed to be a prophet!” Many thought he was, in spite of that denial, and in spite of his many false predictions over the years.

More recently, Harold Camping predicted Christ would return in May, 2011, and when He did not, the prediction was changed to the fall of the year – and He still did not come. Camping’s name is now “mud” in the eyes of his followers.

But is there an indication of when Christ will return – an indication that is tried and true, and backed up by the Scriptures so that even a child can understand it?

Christ Himself said to His disciples, “I will come again” (John 14:3). The whole message of Christ involved His “second coming” to reign over the nations, and many prophecies allude to it, explain and describe it, and it is the focal point of the gospel, or good news, of the coming “Kingdom of God” to this earth (Matt.24:30-31; I Cor.15:50-52; I Thess.4:16-17; Rev.20:1-4).

The Apostle Peter's Commentary

The apostle Peter seems to have this Scripture in mind when he writes, in the New Testament, “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that ONE DAY is with the Lord as a THOUSAND YEARS, and a thousand years as ONE DAY. The Lord is not

slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the *day of the Lord* will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:8-10).

When the Messiah returns, He will inaugurate a millennial kingdom lasting one thousand years. As John wrote, when Messiah comes, the Adversary -- Satan the devil -- will be bound for one thousand years (Rev.20:1-3). During that same period, John says, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and REIGNED WITH CHRIST A THOUSAND YEARS. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the *thousand years were finished*" (Rev.20:4-5).

The pattern of the seven day week, concluded by a Sabbath day of rest from work, labor, and toil, is a picture of the Plan of God. If the Sabbath of rest from "man's works," lasts 1000 years (Rev.20:4), then it stands to reason that the previous SIX "days" would equal SIX THOUSAND years in fulfillment!

Thus when Peter said a "day" with the Lord is as a thousand years, he was not just joking, or being rhetorical! Literally a "day" in God's plan is a thousand years, and therefore a "week" in God's plan is *seven thousand years!* Since the final "day" is a Sabbath of a 1,000-year day, then the previous six days equal 6,000 years!

So how is it working out?

A final clue to the 6,000 years of man, followed by the Messianic Kingdom, is found in the New Testament, the story of the Transfiguration of Yeshua. Notice the account: "And AFTER SIX DAYS Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, *and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light*" (Matt.17:1-2).

Here, six days equals 6,000 years, in typology. At the end of 6,000 years, Jesus Christ will appear IN HIS GLORY (Matt.24:30; 25:31; Rev.1:13-16; 11:15-17; 19:11-16). Thus the fact that "six days" passed before Christ revealed to His chief disciples His glory, in an awesome vision (Matt.17:9), indicates that 6,000 years will pass till the coming of the Son of Man in His glory at the end of the age!

We read in the Talmud, in tractate Sanhedrin, the following:

"Rav Kattina said, 'The world will exist for six thousand years, then for one thousand it will be desolate, as it is said, "The Lord alone will be exalted in that day"' (Isaiah 2:11). Abaye said, 'It will be desolate two thousand, as it is said, "After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, and we will live in his sight"' (Hos.6:2).

"It has been taught in accordance with Rav Kattina, 'Just as every seventh year is a year of *sh'mittah* [letting the land lie fallow], so it is with the world: one thousand years out of seven are to be fallow -- as proved by the following three texts taken together [in which the key word is "day"]': 'The Lord alone will be exalted in that day' (Isaiah 2:11); 'A psalm and song for the day of *Shabbat*' (Psalm 92:1), meaning the day that is entirely *Shabbat*; and, 'For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past' (Psalm 90:4).

"The school of Eliyahu teaches: 'THE WORLD EXISTS FOR SIX THOUSAND YEARS -- two thousand of them *tohu* ["void"]; two thousand, *Torah*; and two thousand, the era of the MESSIAH. But because of our numerous iniquities many of these years have been lost'" (Sanhedrin 97a-97b).

It is interesting that Judaism understands the 6,000 year plan, and declares that Elijah the prophet taught it. The first two thousand years of mankind's history was in "chaos," leading to the Flood and tower of Babel. The next two thousand spoke of the time of Abraham and Moses till the coming of the Messiah – the first coming of the Messiah (Christ was born in 4 B.C. and began His ministry in 27 A.D.). And since then, for about 2,000 years, it is the "era of the Messiah," the time between the first and second coming of the Messiah – the time the gospel has been preached around the world, and extended out to the Gentile world!

This would indicate that the 2,000 years of the "era of the Messiah" is about finished, and the SECOND coming is right around the corner!

Notice that the Jewish rabbis say that because of "our numerous iniquities many of these years have been lost." How true! The Jewish calendar has "lost" 236 years, placing Creation of Adam in 3760 B.C. The Jewish Calendar says this past fall began the Jewish year 5772 from Creation. This itself creates confusion in terms of chronology. The creation date set by the Jewish calendar is 236 years later than the carefully reconstructed date discovered by Archbishop James Ussher, of 4004 B.C. The Jewish calendar puts creation at 3760 B.C.E. This date is impossible. So indeed, their sins have caused them to "lose" 236 years from the Calendar!

Ussher's Chronology

Archbishop Ussher, a brilliant Protestant theologian of the seventeenth century, studied the chronology of the Bible and concluded Creation was 4004 B.C. His calculations, if right, would indicate the 6000 years would be up in the fall of 1997. To be precise, October 23, 1997. Of course, the world did not end on that date, nor did the Messiah come. However, the stock market took a dive of 560 points four days later. Could that have been a warning of things to come?

Archbishop Ussher was a great Biblical historian and theologian. He was born in Nicholas Street, Dublin, in 1581 A.D., and was one of the first scholars admitted to Trinity College, at the tender young age of 13. Ussher believed the Bible was literally true, like other scholars of his day, and attempted to work out the precise day and time of Creation, and when we could expect Christ's second coming. He was an expert in

Hebrew, Latin and Greek, and was assisted by one of the largest libraries in all of Western Europe.

Ussher concluded Creation occurred on noon, October 23rd, 4004 B.C. His reasoning was simple: Since history showed Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C., and Biblical chronology showed his death was 3,442 years after Creation, then Creation had to be 4004 B.C. 3442 plus 562 equals 4004. Simple.

Ussher's scholarship was published in 1650 as *The Annals of the World*. Ussher also deduced that the Temple of Solomon was finished on 2004 B.C., 2000 years after Creation, and Christ was born 4 B.C., 4000 years from Creation.

Ussher believed, as many did in his time, that the end of the world or age would occur 6000 years from Creation. His calculations were widely accepted at the time and were inserted into the margins of many published Bibles of the Authorized King James Version in 1701.

However, if we attempt to calculate 6,000 years from 4004 B.C., we come to 1997 A.D. (remember, there is no year zero). That was 15 years ago – and the Messiah still has not come! Some may wonder why we "add" a year in the final column, to reach 2004 A.D. The answer is simple. There is no year "zero." Therefore, when counting from B.C. to A.D., we must "add" an extra year for the years to correspond to reality.

What gives? What happened?

The Book of Jubilees

The book of Jubilees is an ancient Jewish book written about 150-200 years before Christ by Levites. It is another account of the history of mankind from the time of Adam's Creation. Written by priests, it is an excellent source document for Biblical history. The book of Jubilees tells us something very interesting. Notice:

“And during the first week of the first jubilee Adam and his wife had been in the garden of Eden for SEVEN YEARS tilling and guarding it. And we gave him work and we were teaching him to do everything which was appropriate for tilling. And he was tilling. And he was naked, but he neither knew it nor was he ashamed. And he was guarding the garden from the birds and beasts and cattle and gathering its fruits and eating. And he used to set aside the rest for himself and his wife. And what was being guarded he set aside.

“At the END OF SEVEN YEARS which he completed there, *SEVEN YEARS EXACTLY*, in the second month on the seventeenth day, the *serpent came* and drew near to the woman” (Jubilees 3:15-17).

As we know, Eve and Adam both sinned, were enticed into transgression, and banished from the Garden of Eden. This occurred, therefore, *seven years* after their original creation, in 4004 B.C. -- or in the year 3997 B.C. Thus mankind did not come under the influence of Satan until 3997 B.C.

The seven years of idyllic paradise should not be counted in the 6,000 years of man's labor and toil, during which mankind has been subject to the deception, wiles, and influences of the "god of this world," Satan the devil (II Cor.4:4, Eph.2:2).

Therefore, if we add seven years, or count from 3997 B.C., the end of the 6,000 years would be 2004 A.D. – eight years ago! But Christ did not return then, either!

So what is the answer?

King Hezekiah's History

The answer, I believe, is found in the life of king Hezekiah, of ancient Judah.

Hezekiah was a godly king who "did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done" (II Kings 18:3). During his reign the king of Assyria came up against Jerusalem and besieged it. God Himself defended the city, "And it came to pass on a certain night [Passover?] that the angel of the LORD went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead" (II Kings 19:35).

Hezekiah became deathly sick when he was 39 years old. In fact, God sent the prophet Isaiah with a message to the king, saying, "Thus says the LORD: Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live" (II Kings 20:1).

Hezekiah was so moved by this announcement of his impending early death that he prayed to the LORD mightily, saying, "Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before you in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in your sight" (verse 3). He wept bitterly.

God heard his prayer of anguish and grief, and sent Isaiah back to the king, saying, "Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will HEAL you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. And I will add to your days FIFTEEN YEARS. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David" (II Kings 20:5-6).

Isaiah laid a poultice of figs on the boil afflicting Hezekiah and he recovered (verse 7). Hezekiah then asked for a sign that the LORD would indeed heal him. Isaiah gave the king a choice. He said, "This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing of which He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?"

Hezekiah replied, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no,

but let the shadow go backward ten degrees.” So Isaiah the prophet “cried out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz” (II Kings 20:8-11). In other words, the earth stopped its diurnal rotation, paused, and then backed up ten degrees, thereby lengthening the day by at least 40 minutes, the time it would require the sun to travel 10 degrees across the sky!

This was all not just a “sign” to Hezekiah – it was a sign for us at the end of the age, as well! The heavenly sign which accompanied Hezekiah’s healing will be repeated by heavenly signs in our time.

Jesus Christ declared, “And there will be SIGNS in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth, distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:25).

God gave Hezekiah a “sign” in the heavens that He was going to extend his time on earth. Even so, before Christ returns, God is going to create “signs” in the heavens. One of those signs involves the sun going down. As the prophet Amos declared, “And it shall come to pass in that day, says the Lord GOD, That I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight” (Amos 8:9).

Micah declares, “Therefore you [the prophets and ministers who make God’s people stray – see Micah 3:5] shall have night without vision, and you shall have darkness without divination; the sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them” (Micah 3:6).

Habakkuk warns, “The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; at the light of Your arrows they went, at the shining of Your glittering spear. You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled [threshed] the nations in anger; You went forth for the salvation of Your people, for salvation with Your Anointed” (Hab.3:11-13).

When God caused a heavenly sign in the days of Hezekiah, a sign of coming salvation and healing, He then added fifteen years to Hezekiah’s life span. When God intervenes in the end of this age, will He grant fifteen more years, above and beyond the “allotted time,” to give His people fifteen more years to repent, and to get ready and to prepare themselves for the coming of the Lord?

Amos declares, “Prepare to meet your God, O Israel” (Amos 4:12).

The story of Hezekiah and the added 15 years is given in II Kings 20 and in Isaiah, chapter 38. Why is it repeated twice? Is this an indication that it will be fulfilled twice – once in the era of Hezekiah, and a second time, its true fulfillment, at the end of the age, before the coming of the Messiah? Why is it mentioned in II Kings, as a historical fact, but then also the whole story is detailed in the prophetic book of Isaiah, which is written for the END TIME GENERATION? Is it because the original encounter is a prophetic TYPE for us to consider, today?

I always wondered why the account, already given in the book of Kings, was also expounded at length in the book of Isaiah the prophet. It was mystifying – it seemed unusual. God does not “repeat Himself” – unless there is a very good reason. DUALITY is a vital principle of prophetic interpretation! Much of Biblical prophecy is DUAL!

There was an ancient Babylon, there is a modern end-time Babylon (Rev.18:1-4). There was the ancient fall of Jerusalem, and a future fall of Jerusalem (Zech.14:1-4). There was the abomination of desolation in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and there will be a second abomination of desolation in the END time (Dan.11:31, Matt.24:15).. There was a first Adam, and a second “Adam” – Christ (I Cor.15:45-49).

No doubt God placed the account of Hezekiah’s added fifteen years in the prophecies of Isaiah to teach us an important, vital prophetic TRUTH – something for us to pay heed and to understand!

Why did God give king Hezekiah fifteen additional years, when He had already announced that the king was going to die? Isn’t this a type of God’s mercy and love, patience and faithfulness?

When Hezekiah’s life was extended, He thanked God profusely, and thought deeply upon his ways. He prayed, and vowed, “I shall walk carefully all my years in the bitterness of my soul. O LORD, by these things men live; and in all these things is the life of my spirit; so You will restore me and make me live. Indeed it was for my own peace that I had great bitterness [suffering]; but You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back” (Isaiah 38:15-17).

Similarly, God is giving US more time than originally planned. The 6,000 year plan would have been concluded – time was up – in 1997 or 2004. But God has EXTENDED THE TIME till the second coming of Christ, to JUDGE the earth, giving us more time to REPENT, and straighten out our lives, and to PREPARE to meet Christ at His coming!

Extended Time

Consider this: If we add 15 years to the end of the 6,000 years in 1997, we come to the year 2012 – the year of the END of the Mayan calendar. It is to be a year of stress, anxiety, turmoil and trouble, witnessing the transition to a new age.

But if we add the 15 years to the year 2004, which represents 6,000 years from the year Adam Eve sinned against God, and then count inclusively, then the countdown brings us to the year 2018-2019 A.D. – picturing the extended time period to the coming of the Messiah, bringing salvation to His people!

If we take 2012 as the ending point of the extended 15 years, and then add Daniel’s 70th week, representing a time period of seven years, beginning with 2012 and

counting inclusively, it once again brings us to 2018-2019 A.D.

We are standing this year on the threshold of eternity, and the beginning of the fulfillment of every end-time, last-days, final countdown to the coming of the Messiah!

Prophets, predictors, and prognosticators have been wrong in the past. But we should not be dismayed or daunted, feel disillusioned or disappointed. It was meant to be. But Peter declares, “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (II Pet.1:19-21).

Why has God extended the time?

Peter explains, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up [laid bare]. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (II Pet.3:9-13).

God has given us “extra time.” We are now in “overtime.” “Extra innings.”

Nevertheless, the END of the age rapidly approaches. We are irrevocably drawing closer to the “battle of that great day of God Almighty” known as Armageddon (Rev.16:14-16). Christ warns each one of us, “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments [clean, purified], lest he walk naked and they see his shame” (v.15).

Ezekiel declares, “An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land. Now the end has come upon you, and I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways, and I will repay you for all your abominations. My eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity; but I will repay your ways, and your abominations will be in your midst; then you shall know that I am the LORD!” (Ezek.7:2-4).

“Thus says the LORD: A disaster, a singular disaster; behold, it has come! An end has come, the end has come; it has dawned for you; behold, it has come! Doom has come to you . . . The time has come . . .” (Ezek.7:5-7).

Scoffers may scoff and sneer – but our time is almost up! God’s mercy will not be extended forever. The day of reckoning is here, it is beginning – it is *NOW!*