

DOES THE SON KNOW?

Does the Son Know the Day and Hour of His Return?

Christians, through the signs of the times, can know the nearness of the Lord's return; and the Lord has seen fit to supply His people with an abundance of information in this realm.

Christians though cannot know the day nor the hour. These specifics are reserved for the "Father only" (*cf.* Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32).

Within this framework, some Christians have been disturbed by the way Mark 13:32 reads (Matt. 24:36 also reads this same way in several of the better Greek manuscripts and is so translated in most later English versions [*ref.* ASV, NASB, NIV]):

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father."

The way that this verse reads in the English text has left some with the thought that even Christ Himself did not know the day and hour of His return, which, of course, would reflect negatively upon His deity.

Seeing this problem, some expositors have attempted to call attention to self-imposed limitations in connection with Christ's incarnation and appearance "in the likeness of sinful flesh" on the earth (human limitations, distinguishing between Christ's human and Divine natures). Though viewing the matter after this fashion may seemingly solve the problem (in reality though, it produces far more problems than it solves), the text actually teaches something quite different.

(Christ is *NOT* both God and man, with some type distinction existing between the two, allowing for the preceding. Rather, *He is the God-Man, wherein such a distinction CANNOT possibly exist.*)

Correctly translated, the text is really a direct allusion to the deity of Christ, showing to the ones being addressed that *He was exactly Who He claimed to be*. Matthew 24:36 also teaches the same truth with the addition of the words, “neither the Son,” for the Greek manuscripts containing these words read the same way as the Greek text of Mark 13:32 reads.

The Greek words *ei me*, appearing in and translated “but” in both Matt. 24:36 and Mark 13:32, are the key to a correct understanding of these passages. Possibly the best comments on the matter were those given years ago by Archbishop Trench as he was expounding on the words *ei me* in Mark 13:32:

“The late Archbishop Trench, one of the great authorities on words, when lecturing to a London college, called attention to the fact that in the last part of this verse [‘but the Father’], the two Greek words *ei me*, translated ‘but,’ really mean ‘if not.’ The Greek word *ei* means ‘if,’ and the Greek word *me* means ‘not.’ He called attention to the fact that any good Greek Concordance would reveal the same.

Archbishop Trench understood this verse to mean, ‘If I were not God as well as man, even I would not know the day nor the hour.’ Thus, Mark 13:32 corrected would read:

‘But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son if not the Father.’

In other words, Jesus says that if He were not the Father He would not know. We have the same truth in John 9:33 with the same two Greek words, *ei me*, translated, ‘if not’ — ‘If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.’”

— *Selected Writings of A. Edwin Wilson*

Thus, Matt. 24:36 and Mark 13:32, rather than showing self-imposed limitations of the Son (As previously stated, the attempted explanation used in some Christian circles), or a non-deity status of the Son (as claimed by certain cults), are two of the most straightforward verses in the New Testament bearing witness to the Son’s true identity.

He is one with the Father, possessing the same attributes. If He were not God, He would not know the day and hour of His return; but He is God, and He consequently does know.