

# THE MESSENGER



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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Listen to PROVE ALL THINGS on 730 AM WKRE, Sunday mornings from 8:15 to 8:30

## Date Setters

by Luther W. Martin

*continued*

### Second Coming of Christ

*Justin* (2<sup>nd</sup> Century, A.D.) debated with Trypho, the Jew, the meaning of “time, times, and half a time.”

*Clement of Alexandria* (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Century, A.D.) wrote an explanation of Daniel 12. The seventy weeks are seventy years which elapsed from Christ’s birth to Jerusalem’s destruction. The 2300 evenings and mornings are the six years and four months during the half of which Nero, ruled; and the other half, Vespasian, Otho, Galba and Vitellus reigned.

*Tertullian* (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Century, A.D.) argued that Daniel’s prophecies applied to Jesus.

*Origen* (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Century, A.D.) also applied Daniel’s prophecies to Christ.

*Hippolytus* (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Century, A.D.) urged his students not to be too curious about the end, but, himself, indicated that the Messianic time was not at hand.

### Jews Used Five Methods of Calculating

1. Primarily the Book of Daniel.
2. Biblical passages, other than Daniel.
3. Based upon the years of exile; Egypt, Babylon. Relative circumstances might provide the secret of any later exile. There was some divine logic in the fixing of the term of the exile in Egypt (430 years, 210 years?); Babylon (70 years, 52 years?).
4. Gematria – the interpretation of a word or phrase, based upon the Hebrew numerical value of the letter(s). Under the general heading of Gematria are at least three sub-divisions. (1) Notarikon – the use of each letter of a word, as an initial (acrostic) of some other word. (2) Ziruf or Hiluf – interpreting a word by crossing or transposing its letters (anagram). And, (3) Temurah – the substitution of one letter for another. Thus, Gematria was an age-old device among the Hebrews. It was looked upon as providing information from on High; limited solely by the wisdom and skill of the speculator.

5. Astrology – generations of dwelling out under the stars, contributed toward Bedouin (desert dweller) familiarity with the heavens. Nomadic Hebrews did not ‘worship the heavens as there be “lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: ...” (Gen. 1:14); the study of the astral bodies was considered appropriate in determining important events; such as the appearance of some brighter than usual star.

### **Summary of Jewish Viewpoint!**

*David ben Solomon ibn Abi Zimri* (1479-1589 A.D.), an author of the mystic significance of the Hebrew alphabet, quotes Maimonides’ opinion that “The script which we now employ is the Assyrian script,” “and that it is the script in which God wrote the Torah.” “This is the script,” writes Radbaz, Edited, Amsterdam, 1713, “in which the Torah and Tables were given; and all the secrets of their forms, their flourishes and their crownlets, majuscular letters and minuscular, crooked and looped, bent and straight, and all their intimidations and mysteries were revealed to Moses, just like all the rest of the oral law, and this script has a sanctity all of its own.”

As recently as 1863, Aaron Kornfield wrote a book, in which he catalogues over 300 Rabbinic laws and interpretations derived *per Gematriam* from biblical verses, *Edition, Prague, 1865*.

Thus, with all of the speculation of the Jews, both before and after Christ, it is not surprising that many claiming to be ‘Christians,’ adopted similar philosophies, which led them to set dates for his return.

### **Date-Setting for Christ’s Return!**

*Tichonius* (381), a religious writer of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, said Christ would return in 381.

*Hippolytus* (170-236 A.D.) and *Lactantius* (250-330 A.D.) both predicted that 500 A.D. would be the time for the second coming of Christ.

*1000 A.D.* – That date seemed to attract many prognosticators, but they all missed it! In fact, since the calendar was known to be in error as to the exact birth-year of Christ, one thousand years from his birth was the important date, and that ranged from 994 A.D. to 1003 A.D.

*Benedictus Aretius of Berne* (1505-1547) calculated that 1260 years added to the year of Constantine’s making Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in 312 A.D. (312 + 1260 = 1572), that 1572 should be the year!

*Michael Stiefel* (1486-1567), an acquaintance of Martin Luther, concluded that Christ would come, and Judgment would begin, 8:00 a.m., October 19, 1533. Stiefel missed it! Some folks had neglected raising a crop that year; Stiefel had given away all his possessions, so M. Luther took him into his home. The same year, a group of Anabaptists had taught that the Millennium would start that year.

*to be continued*

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## **News and Notes:**

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

“...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16