

Does the Bible Teach that May 21 Will Be Judgment Day? (Part 1)

I. The reason for the question: The predictions and media campaign of Harold Camping and his followers.

II. Harold Camping's Biblical Time-Line

- Creation: 11,013 B.C.
- Noah's Flood: 4,990 B.C.
- Death of Christ: April 1, 33 A.D.
- Beginning of Church Age (Pentecost): May 22, 33 A.D.
- End of Church Age and Beginning of Great Tribulation: May 21, 1988
- Out-pouring of Holy Spirit for Evangelism: September 6, 1994
- Day of Judgment/Rapture/End of GT: May 21, 2011
- Destruction of World: October 21, 2011

III. Chief Objection from Bible Students: Matthew 24:36-44; Acts 1:6-7; 1 Thes. 5:1-3.

Reply: That was true then, but not so now. The Spirit is giving special insight to true believers concerning the timeline of history so they can, in turn, warn the world to repent.

- A. Ecclesiastes 8:5 – “Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth [lit. “will know”] both time and judgment.”
- B. Amos 3:7: “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”
- C. Matthew 13:34: “All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:”
- D. September 6, 1994: Special outpouring of the Holy Spirit brought about fulfillment of Ecc. 8:5.

IV. How was the date of May 21, 2011 determined?

- A. The year is determined by virtue of the fact that it occurs 7,000 years after the flood.
 - 1. With God 1 day = 1,000 years (2 Pet. 3:8).
 - 2. Noah was a preacher (1 Pet. 2:5). His message (based on Genesis 7:4): “Mankind has seven “days” (i.e. 7,000 years) to escape destruction.”
 - 3. The year of the flood was 4990 B.C. Add 7,000 years = 2011 A.D.
- B. The date: The flood began on the second month, seventeenth day of Noah's 600th year. That day on the current Hebrew calendar is May 21.
- C. The date: based on spiritual meaning of key numbers.
 - 1. The significance of the numbers.
 - a. Number 5 → *atonement or redemption* (Exodus 30:15; Numbers 3:47-48)
 - b. Number 10 (or multiples) → *completeness* (10 coins, 100 sheep, 1000 years).
 - c. Number 17 → *heaven* (Jeremiah 32:7-17)

2. The Story in the numbers.

- a. The Age of Salvation Dates: April 1, 33 to September 21, 2011.
- b. Total (solar) days: 722,500
- c. Equation: $722,500 = (5 \times 10 \times 17) \times (5 \times 10 \times 17)$ or
(Atonement x Completeness x Heaven)²
- d. Meaning: The atonement demonstrated by Christ's suffering and death on April 1, 33 (#5) is 100% completed on May 21, 2011 (#10) when all true believers are raptured into heaven (#17).

V. Some of Harold Camping's Fallacies

- A. He rips verses from their context and interprets them to refer to prophetic events rather than recognizing the plain meaning of the original author.
- B. His assignment of spiritual meaning to numbers (allegorizing) is completely subjective (allowing him to "prove" anything he wants), and without biblical warrant or precedent. He is inconsistent in when he takes numbers literally or symbolically.
- C. He absolutizes a speculative chronological scheme. His timeline is based on dubious inferences. When he gives a date for an event, he is asserting something that the Bible does not itself attest.
- D. His Gnostic approach to spiritual understanding (wherein the truth is only available to those few who are "enlightened") elevates his *interpretation* of the Bible over the Bible itself as the believer's authority.
- E. In declaring the entire church to be apostate, Camping is setting himself outside of the church and above all other church leaders. This is the mark of a cult leader.
- F. In his citation of Amos 3:7, he seems to be claiming prophetic office. But his prior prediction that the Lord would return in 1994 disqualifies him.
- G. Much of his teaching is contradicted by the Bible:
- H. In his obsession with numbers and telling the future, he has missed the Story Line of the Bible. He betrays no understanding of the plot – or how it ends.

VII. Problems with this "end of the world" campaign

- A. By his insistence that the Bible is "guaranteeing" something that it doesn't even teach, he is taking the name of the Lord in vain.
- B. He is giving a culture that doesn't take the Bible seriously another excuse to dismiss God's revelation.
- C. The failure of his interpretation of prophecy will
 - cause people to overlook the significance of prophetic revelation. (2 Peter 3:1ff)
 - Make people think there is no ultimate moral accountability
 - Create disillusionment in the hearts and minds of his followers.

VIII. Conclusion: