

BEWARE OF DECEPTION: RESPONSES TO HAROLD CAMPING'S DATE-SETTING

(Originally preached by Dr. Robert R. Zweitzig in April 2011 on radio—WCHR – 920AM from Trenton, N.J.)

The Scripture references were read on radio, thus those who view this article will need to look at the texts for themselves.

Harold Camping and his radio so-called ministry are continuing to mislead people with false teaching. The people who help that radio work by giving many millions are culpable and remain guilty before God for supporting his deceptions. Camping distorts the whole of the prophetic Word of God. He chooses what he will accept as literal or symbolic truth in the Bible. He makes his own rules and defies others in the process. His call-in program every night of the week cuts people off who might very occasionally be making good points as he talks them down and completely controls what is said—no matter how sincere the caller may be.

Camping predicted the return of Christ for Sept. 6, 1994. After that he adjusted the date for other days in Sept. and then on into the Fall of 1994. He toyed with other dates also, but now emphatically states that he cannot be wrong at all about the Rapture of believers on May 21, 2011. The warnings about false prophets are given in Deut. chpts. 13 and 18 along with warnings in Jeremiah, Acts 20, 1 John 2, 2 Pet. 2 and Rev. 22. We will examine some of these later. Our message will divide into three parts: the Cross of *Calvary*, *Prophecy*, and *Destiny*.

1. **CALVARY:** *Camping has been teaching the heretical idea that Christ Jesus already died before the Creation of the universe and that His death on Calvary was therefore only an example.*

a. But let's note together 1 Pet. 1:18-20. Christ didn't have a body before the foundation of the world. The humanity of our Savior began at the conception by the Holy Spirit in the virgin's womb.

b. Examine Heb. 10:4.

c. Christ Jesus was foreordained to go to Calvary and die for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). If Christ in fact died in eternity before the Creation, then how could it be that He was foreordained to die? Prior to creation, Christ had no blood to shed and where then are the Jews and Romans (Gentiles) to crucify Christ? Every reference in the Old Testament such as Isa. 53 looks *forward* to a true sin-bearing death of the Messiah. Every verse in the NT which explains something about what happened on the Cross in the Lord Jesus Christ refers to our sins being borne and carried for us. Galatians 3:13 says, "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs upon a tree.*" Where was the tree in eternity before Creation? Romans 3:24-25 say, "*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood...*" How is Christ set forth in eternity where none saw Him crucified, but here it says He was set forth in a public way? Romans 5:9-10 say, "*Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*" How could blood be shed when Christ had no body back before Creation? Why do we then have Gal. 4:4-5? (look up). In the fullness of time!—God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law to redeem those that were under the law. It happened in the *fullness of time* and it was redemption that was bought by Christ at the Cross as He was crucified by Romans and Jews for all of us. While Rev. 13:8 talks of Christ as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Acts 2:23 says that Christ was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God so that Jew and Gentile took Him and by wicked hands crucified and slew Him. Yes, in eternity it was determined as a foregone conclusion that Christ would die for our sins. Since God guaranteed it in eternity, it was as good as done; yet, in the fullness of time it had yet to happen. Furthermore, follow this simple logic: read Romans 6:10 and Heb. 7:27. These are the nails driven into the coffin of Camping's false and heretical teachings: here's the Scripture with its simple truth: (1) Christ died once for sin (Rom. 6:10); (2) Christ did this once, when He offered up Himself (Heb. 7:27); (3) Once in the **end of the ages**, has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26); (4) So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. From this, think it through: if Christ died in eternity and His death on Calvary were only an example, then Christ would have had to be resurrected in eternity. He could not stay dead, then appear alive in this world without being resurrected in eternity. But then how does the Christ who was resurrected in eternity ever die again—even if it is only an example since the Scripture repeatedly says Christ died once, once, once?! Christ died once and was raised from the dead once—never to die again. Camping is judged a heretic right from the Scriptures which he perverts.

Remember: Camping chooses what he will accept as literal or symbolic truth in the Bible and makes his own arbitrary rules of interpretation.

2. **PROPHECY:** Camping perverts the prophetic Word by making up his own calendar. He confuses literal numbers in the Bible and claims that they are only symbolic and forces his own sequence of chronology upon them. He denies the literal significance of the 70th week in Daniel 9 even though he accepts the original 483 years of Daniel 9 which are the 69 weeks of years ending at the crucifixion of Christ. Then with all his twisting and changing of numbers in the Bible, he assumes to himself to be able to predict the Rapture of believers—not the true Church which he now calls false, but post-Church age believers which happen to be the poor dupes who follow his demonic teachings and monetarily fund all his misinformation.

As an example: Camping insists that the passage in 2 Pet. 3:8 refers to a day as equal to a thousand years, and that since Noah's worldwide flood (dated by him at 4990 B.C.), there are 7,000 years to the end of this age, which he places at May 21, 2011. May 21 he thus defines as the Rapture of believers. While all of this information may fly over many Christians who don't study the Word of God, one may just have to wait until May 22 to see that Camping and his followers are wrong. Now, as to Camping's use of 2 Pet. 3:8, we respond:

1. He misses the use of the little word "as" which occurs twice in 2 Pet. 3:8. So which is it? Is one 24 hour day equal to a thousand years or a thousand years equal to one 24 hour day? It can't be both. Time, whether one 24 hour day or a thousand years does not affect the eternal God, but it does affect us as much more history is put into a thousand years than can ever be found in one day. Here in 2 Pet. 3:8 the Holy Spirit is saying that the passage of time as we experience it does not affect God and His prophetic program, and that scoffers who think that everything will continue as it always has, will find out to their chagrin and judgment that God's program is right on time. Let's re-read 2 Pet. 3:8 and compare it with Psa. 90:4 "*For a thousand years in your eyes (are) as a day of old (yesterday) when it passes by or a watch in the night*" (Hebrew).

2. Now in 2 Pet. 3:8 Camping demands that the thousand years are literal, but when God reveals a one thousand year period in which we reign together with Christ on earth after His second coming to earth, Camping allegorizes it away and refers it to the Church age. Yet, God says 6 times that there will be a thousand year reign of Christ in Rev. 20 (note Rev. 20:4, 7) and the references here do not use the comparative word "as" used in 2 Pet. 3:8. Also, read Rev. 2:27. If people argue as does Camping that there is no literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth, then why would we be associated with Christ in a reign over nations in heaven that is characterized as a rule with a rod of iron. If this happens in heaven, then why in a sinless place as heaven or the new heavens and earth would a rod of iron be needed to rule?

3. When you study Scripture, no matter how you put numbers together, there is no date given for the Rapture of the church in the Bible—no matter how we compare Scripture with Scripture. People can appear to make the Bible say anything when applying their own theology and rules. For example, compare this Scripture: Matt. 27:5 "Judas went and hung himself" and in Luke 10:37, "Go and do thou likewise." But this is the kind of nonsensical Scripture comparison going on in the brain of Camping and company.

Then again, read Deut. 18:20-22; Jer. 28:9, 15-17 which contain judgment against false prophets. Where does this put Camping? If we did not have a Biblical dispensational grasp of the Scripture where we correctly divide or handle the Word of truth, then such OT requirements would mean the church or believers should put him to death. It obviously does not apply to our authority at this point the way it did with Elijah and the false Baal prophets he executed in 1 Kings 19.

4. As we noted, Camping teaches that there is no literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth and he treats the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ as one and the same event.

a. the first reason Camping does this is by giving up on God's eternal covenants with the nation of Israel; he refuses the plain, literal truth of large sections of Scripture. Yet, the Bible makes clear the distinction of the coming of Christ in the air to take believers home to heaven which is the Rapture of believers at the end of the Church Age, while the Second Coming of Christ is back to earth where His feet touch the Mt. of Olives as He rescues national Israel from Armageddon.

Some examples of Scripture for the Rapture of the true Church (the spiritual body of Christ) back to heaven are in John 14:2-3 and 1 Thess. 4:14-17. As Jesus said in John 14, we go back to heaven where He is right now.

Yet, the Second Coming is back to earth: compare Acts 1:9-11; Zech. 14:4; Ezek. 43:7; Isa. 60:13. These verses speak of Jesus' physical presence in Zion on earth at His second coming.

b. the second reason he treats the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ as the same event is that he teaches a replacement theology which is one of the foundations of amillennialism (no millennial reign of Christ from Jerusalem over the whole earth). Replacement theology, a branch of Reformed theology, holds that the Church replaces national Israel and as heir to Israel is the beneficiary of all the promises made to Israel.

c. Now Camping comes up with his own brand of replacement theology: the Church age ended, according to him, in 1988 and all the churches and people in them are doomed to destruction and are places of idol worship where the abomination of desolation dwells. Therefore, Harold Camping, Family Radio, and so-called saved people who have left local churches have replaced even the Church which formerly in their system replaced Israel.

d. In rapid strokes of the pen, the Apostle Paul devastates both replacement theology and Camping's replacement of replacement theology in Rom. 11:1-2, 11-12, 25-26.

e. Camping attempts to change the Word of God from 7 years of Tribulation where Scripture in Daniel 9:24-27 shows a total of 70 weeks of years or 490 years of prophecy connected to national Israel. There were 483 years from the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile until the crucifixion of the Messiah and 1 week of years or 7 years which are yet to come where Israel and the nations will be judged. Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5. However, Camping changes the 7 year Tribulation clearly shown in Daniel and Revelation to 23 years of Tribulation from 1988 to 2011 and the 5 months after May 21, 2011 are, according to him, the Great Tribulation. Yet, the Bible makes clear two time periods of 1260 days or 42 months after the unknown date of the true Rapture of the Church.

3. **DESTINY:** Camping says Hell is the annihilation of the whole person—body, soul and spirit. This denies the truth of the Bible about the Lake of Fire—all taken by him to be symbolic of the eternal extinction of the unsaved. The fact that there is going to be a second bodily resurrection which is for the unsaved (the unbelievers) would be a waste of time and material if those who refuse Christ are annihilated and go out of existence. Rather, the Bible makes clear that the second resurrection dealing with the unsaved mandates a Lake of Fire with everlasting punishment in resurrected bodies outfitted for that judgment which goes on forever. To refuse the eternal results of Christ's sin-bearing work at Calvary puts a person into the place where they have committed eternal sin that can never be forgiven. That's the reason the Apostle Paul declares that " behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). Since Camping has denied the truth of the Bible about an eternal Hell, some people have called on the phone to him to say that they are greatly relieved since they are unsaved and have no fear because they can live now without Christ and later just become extinct. That satisfies them just fine. Camping diminishes the awfulness of sin and rebellion against God into nothingness. By teaching this nonsense, Camping has "created" another gospel and salvation which can avoid repentance and redemption by the result of extinction.

Yet, make no mistake: the following Scriptures along with a host of others teach about an eternal Lake of Fire with eternal consciousness of the lost forever and ever. See Matt. 25:31-34, 41, 46; Rev. 14:9-11; 20:10, 15; 21:8.

Many people are following this man including the people who work for him—who are false for staying with Family Radio or not standing up to him. His radio board also follows him implicitly. Their guilt is on them for deceiving so many unthinking, naïve and deluded people—some of whom say they will follow him even if he is **again** wrong.

All Christians should raise this question: If this man Camping were truly saved why would he stridently lead people astray? There is no wiggle room here. It is one thing to be humbly mistaken and quite another to force your twisted understanding upon people as you stand against plain and simple teaching in the Word of God. Unbounded pride, arrogance and aggression coupled with bewilderingly confused teaching does not put a leader in a position to be excused when he is proven wrong. Get it straight: we follow Jesus Christ—our Lord God and Savior and no mere man.