

# WHAT HARM HAS HAROLD CAMPING DONE? THE SINS OF HAROLD CAMPING!

Matthew 24:36, II Peter 3:8-11

Confusion, disappointment, grief, frustration and a horde of other emotions have descended the followers of Harold Camping this evening in the wake of his second failed prediction of judgment day.

In New York, a retired 60 year old man Robert Fitzpatrick spent over \$140,000 of his life savings on subway posters and outdoor advertisements warning of the May 21 Judgment Day. As he stood in Times Square in New York surrounded by onlookers, Fitzpatrick carried a Bible and handed out leaflets as he waited for Judgment Day to begin....When the hour came and went, he said: "*I do not understand why ...*," as his speech broke off and he looked at his watch, "*I do not understand why nothing has happened.*"<sup>1</sup>

Workers at the Family Radio headquarters wear dejection as visible as their "judgment Day" baseball caps. Family Radio offices display a sign reading "*closed, sorry we missed you,*" and Harold Camping cannot be found at his home where he said he would spend his final hours.<sup>2</sup> His neighbour of 40 years said "*I'm concerned for them, that somebody would possibly do something stupid.*" The emotional turmoil that might cause someone to do something "stupid" is not the unfortunate possession of Harold Camping alone, but is shared by thousands of his followers around the world.

So what harm has all this done and what are his sins? It is ironic that while love covers a multitude of sin, it is also love that exposes the sins of men like Camping. The difference of course is the one speaks of the common imperfections in a brother (I Peter 4:8) and the other speaks of publicized and destructive sins, in this case of a false prophet (I Timothy 5:20 "*Them that sin rebuke before all*").

It is necessary to expose this charade because it has been so public. If this were the ramblings of an old man living next door, one would "cover" it in sympathy and respect for age. Camping on the other hand, now airing his second prediction, has a multi-million dollar machine to spread it around the world and has therefore seen much success in numbers.

Another reason for his success in gathering followers is the fact that we are living in an age when men are given to religious delusion and charged with the "*energy of deceit.*" (II Thessalonians 2:11 *cf.* Romans 1:24).

**Harold Camping is indeed a fool to be reckoned with.** He enjoys a listening audience of millions around the world under the name 'Evangelical'. This of course is a name that associates

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<sup>1</sup> REUTERS, As hours tick by, "*Judgment Day*" looks a dud," accessed 21<sup>st</sup> May 2011

<sup>2</sup> San Francisco IB times, "*failed May 2011 Doomsday prophet Harold camping still missing, followers devastated*"

him with us, unfortunately, which lays in our lap the necessity to answer the inevitable (and warranted) criticism.

### SO WHAT ARE HAROLD CAMPING'S SINS?

**First, his abuse of Scripture:** In the face of clear biblical teaching regarding the obscurity of the coming of Christ, Harold Camping cultivated his already fertile imagination for over twenty years in this area of study. It is frightening to think that intelligent men and women could follow the mathematical machinations of an old man with such dedication. His cult-like following bore nothing of the spirit of the Berean's who searched the scriptures.

**He has caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme:** (II Samuel 12:14) The atheists are having a party, the world is mocking the biblical teaching of the Lord's return and the sober judgment of God has become a point of mockery; the boy has cried wolf too many times, and Harold Camping, like the shepherd boy has become a fable!

### WHAT OUGHT TO BE THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSE?

Ought we to be grieved? Yes, that the name of Christ and the work of God have been mocked, and that mockery has been precipitated by the so-called Church of Christ.

Ought we to be fretful and disturbed? No.

- The Christian ought to rest in the knowledge that God is still sovereign; He is not manipulated by the whims of men.
- The Christian, like his Lord, ought to view the futile attempts of the world with contempt. (**Psalm 2:4** "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision").
- The Christian should rejoice that the church of Christ is still advancing. There may be rejoicing in hell today at the confusion of nominal Christianity, if indeed the devil can rejoice in his pitiable condition, but such rejoicing, if it exists, will be brief; the kingdom of God is still in power and the Lord carries his coming only in grace. **II Peter 3:9** "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He has other sheep, which he will bring in and is suffering long with the world to this end. The cry of the Lord's people is "Lord, come quickly" (Revelation 22:20) but the Lord delays his coming so that needy sinners would come and find peace.
- The Christian should also rejoice that the second advent of Christ will be a glorious one for those "who love his appearing." This element of the Lord's return was mournfully understated, if even mentioned in Camping's campaign of terror. Adolph Saphir, the converted Hungarian Jew (1831-1891) said "no waiting of the second advent is healthy and purifying unless it is called forth by the contemplation of the great God and Saviour, who gave himself for us and redeemed us from all iniquity." (*Christ Crucified*, page 9)