

## Deadline October 21: Harold Camping's Last Call

Radio Interview of Nathan Jones by Brian Thomas of [Blessings to Israel Ministries](#)



By [Nathan Jones](#)

On Saturday, October 8, 2011, I was interviewed by host Brian Thomas of Blessings to Israel Ministries on their "God First" program. During the almost hour long interview we discussed the many failed attempts of date-setters to declare an accurate date for the Lord's return, especially concerning Harold Camping as his October 21, 2011 end of the world deadline approaches.

Brian Thomas: Greetings to all in the wonderful name of our great Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Nathan, welcome to the program!

Nathan Jones: It is great to be here, Brian! I hope your audience knows what a blessing you are. I have really been impressed with your dedication to the Lord, your deep research, your articles and all your ministry endeavors. I believe Blessings to Israel Ministries is a blessing not just to Israel but to all believers in Christ.

Brian Thomas: Well, thank you, I greatly appreciate that.

### Harold Camping's Bio

Brian Thomas: We are going to talk today about the dangers of date setting, and in particular as it relates to Harold Camping. Give us a little background on Harold Camping. Exactly who he is and what is the history behind him setting the date for the end of the world at October 21, 2011?

Nathan Jones: I guess you'd have to have been living in a closet for the last 20 years not to know who Harold Camping is. I remember back in my college years in the early 90's working at a T.G.I. Friday's. It seemed like Camping was on the news every night on all the TVs around the restaurant. I remember learning about Harold Camping then and my coworkers were all talking about this guy who was saying that the end of the world was coming.

At the time, Camping believed the Lord would return on September 6, 1994. It seemed the whole world was watching him then. He seemed to have all his "P's & Q's" together and he seemed to know exactly what the Bible had to say about Jesus' return. It was like Camping had some hidden understanding of the Bible that nobody else had. But, well, September 6 came and went and Camping became a big laughing stock and everybody had some kind of joke about him. They all sighed a sigh of relief and many of them moved on. I haven't heard much about Harold Camping since for almost 15 years or so since his 1994 failed prediction.

Harold Camping is an older gentleman, reaching his 90's actually, but he spent many years as the head of the Family Radio Network. The Family Radio Network has 150 radio stations across the United States. Many people listen to his radio station. He's got a lot of money and has put a lot of effort into the study of end times. His passion is a lot like Lamb and Lion Ministries' passion which is to proclaim the soon return of Jesus Christ. Camping feels like he should

proclaim the soon return of Jesus Christ as well, but he does it by a number of different means that aren't quite biblically sound.

Camping's spent a lot of time proclaiming Jesus' soon return and the end of the world. He even wrote a book titled 1994 where he set the date of the Lord's return like I said earlier at September 6, 1994. The Lord didn't return, so he wrote another book called Time has an End, setting yet another "absolute" date of May 21, 2011. I am sure we all remember earlier this year the whole world again was just as interested in Harold Camping as they were back in 1994. That date, too, came and went and the whole world laughed yet again. They laughed at you and me as Christians, they laughed at all the Bible prophecy ministries, they laughed at the Bible, and even worse they laughed at Jesus Christ.

After the second failed prediction, Harold Camping got really sick and kind of disappeared. I give it to the man, he really believes what he preaches. But now, he has set yet another new date and this is the last "drop dead" date. Supposedly, in October 21, 2011, Jesus will return to end the world, and as you know this is the very month. We'll get into that more later why that can't be. But, I think that this is it for Harold Camping. If he doesn't get this date right, then his credibility should be totally shot and his health is just declining so much so that this will be the end of him.

Brian Thomas: Yes, I think you're right. He has as you mentioned from his radio stations a huge amount of wealth. My understanding based on a Fox News Report that in 2009 his non-profit organization filed with the IRS that it received 18.3 million dollars in donations. That is along with assets of over \$104 million including \$34 million in stock and securities. So, this guy is a date setter who has millions of dollars to throw around and promote his dates, and he really gets a lot of his own airtime.

Nathan Jones: Before last May's predicted date, Harold Camping had billboards up all over the country telling people about it. He had T-shirts made. He had bumper stickers as well, all pointing people to his website [wecanknow.com](http://wecanknow.com). I remember earlier this year just walking down the street and the Camping followers who have almost like a crazed cult mentality were handing out their really complicated brochures filled with this tiny 9 point font, I mean you wouldn't even want to read it, explaining why this is the end.

These poor people sold their houses and they gave up their life savings, for they thought it was the end of the world. Why did they need their belongings anymore? So, they all gave it all to Harold Camping. His money rests on the backs of people who believe him so much that they were willing to give up everything and give the money to him.

Brian Thomas: Right, that is really sad. The billboards were all over the place, 5,000 in my understanding. I think there was like 20 RV's. As a matter of fact, one of those billboards was about 5 miles from my house, and so I would see it every morning on the way to work. It had the May 21st judgment date on it. Harold Camping has a lot of money to throw around and sadly there are a lot people who follow him.

## **The Camping of the 1800s**

Brian Thomas: Harold Camping's method of date setting, it seems to parallel a theory that was developed centuries ago. Can you speak a little bit on the historical precedent which Harold Camping may have used to come up with his method of date setting?

Nathan Jones: Well, sure, these date setters are all the same. Every generation seems to have one. American history is resplendent with date setters. One of the main signs that Jesus told us about in Matthew 24 so that we will recognize the end times is by the amount of false prophets and false teachers that will have come into the world. Camping is definitely one of them, and there will be many others throughout American history especially as we get closer and closer to the Lord's return.

If we go back to Vermont in the 1820's, there was a gentleman who was a farmer by the name of William Miller. He believed that Jesus would come back on March 21 of 1844. He took the passage in Daniel 8:14 that read, "...Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" and then he just ran with it. Miller proclaimed that 2,300 days must mean 2,300 years, and well if the sanctuary was cleansed in 457 BC then Jesus would be coming back on March 21, 1844. Well, as you know, this is the 21st Century, so it didn't happen.

Miller again, the same as Camping has done, came up with another date. He admitted his first date was wrong, but set another date for the Lord's return at October 22, 1844. Back then, word of this had reached all over not just this country, but much of the world. Everybody at that time period was riveted by this date, and they were getting really excited. But, when the second date passed and nothing happened, the newspapers called it "The Great Disappointment," and obviously it was. A lot of people were disappointed. We saw the same with Harold Camping, a lot of people gave Miller all their money to warn people about the end of the world. The Millerites as they were called actually went out into the hills in white robes just looking up to heaven waiting to be raptured, but it didn't happen. Like Harold Camping's health is declining now, William Miller's also declined greatly pretty quickly, and he died in disgrace in 1849. That is a sad story. Doesn't it seem like people almost like being deceived?

Later from the number of Miller followers, there was one in particular named Ellen G. White. She was a teenage girl at the time, and she had really latched onto Miller's date setting. What most date setters do when nothing happens is they spiritualize the event, and White declared that something instead must have happened in Heaven. She came up with this idea that instead of the Lord coming to earth on October 22, 1844, that God instituted an "Investigative Judgment." In other words, Jesus locked Himself up in Heaven and He got out these books and like Santa Claus he began picking who was good and who was bad. According to White, He's been doing that ever since then. She also blamed the problem that Jesus didn't come on the Church, saying that since the Church is worshipping the Lord on Sunday and not Saturday that therefore that's the reason why Jesus did not come back when Miller predicted. She believed God is mad at us because we are worshipping Him on the wrong day.

A new group of Christians grew up around Ellen White's teachings and are now called the Seven Day Adventists. If you ever run into them, you'll quickly learn their primary belief seems to be wrapped around worshipping on Saturday only. To them, if you are not worshipping on Saturday but are worshipping on Sunday that is in actuality taking the Mark of the Beast and you will be going to Hell. She kind of kept William Miller's beliefs going, and until this day there are plenty of Seven Day Adventist out there who still are pretty much tied to William Miller. This cult type thinking continues on well past the date setters' dates and even their deaths.

Brian Thomas: That is quite interesting. What I typically find, and you can confirm this, when it comes to the Seven Day Adventists they don't really put their identity up front as far that they are part of that group or that denomination. They seem to kind of slide their identity under the

radar. They kind of start talking with you and teaching you something, and then you later on find out what they actually believe and what they are a part of.

Nathan Jones: Oh, yes, they really love Bible prophecy and they have lots of conferences. I went to one of them and had no idea it was a Seven Day Adventist conference. Really, you get to the last day and – boom! – they pop it on you that they are the Seven Day Adventists. That's when they tell you that if you don't go to their church and worship God on Saturdays then you are not saved. You will need to recommit and then join the Seven Day Adventist Church because they are the "true church." You know, if you really believe in what you are saying then why do you have to hide it to the end of your conference?

Now, there are some good believers among the Seven Day Adventists, but I believe many are deceived by this Saturday only doctrine they've created. I've met a number of them, and there are many who have the same Harold Camping type mind-set. They just can't let go of these false prophets and what they teach.

Brian Thomas: Right, we are definitely in an age of deception, without a doubt.

Nathan Jones: Amen, yes! It's just like Jesus said would happen before His return.

Brian Thomas: Absolutely, an increase in false teachers are a sign of the end times.

In the next part of this series "Deadline October 21," Brian and I will marvel at Harold Camping's blatant errors concerning his interpretation of the Bible.

## Part 2

### Date Setters Interpretive Errors

Brian Thomas: Harold Camping has some blatant errors when it comes to interpreting Bible prophecy, which he then builds these calculations and these scenarios of his on, and how he perceives end time events occurring and how he comes up with these dates. Can you point out some of these interpretive errors that he uses when it comes to his way of interpreting Bible prophecy?

Nathan Jones: Like any date setter or any cult leader because this is what the cults do as well, they look at the Bible but won't take it for its plain sense, literal interpretation. Instead, they spiritualize it.

Camping has been known to say the Bible is nothing more than a giant parable. A parable defined for us in Bible college is "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." Camping just runs with the Scriptures and makes them mean whatever he wants.

For example, just like William Miller did, Camping takes Daniel 8:14 where it says, "...Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," and he just runs with it. Daniel 8:14 was part of a very detailed prophecy that was fulfilled when Antiochus Epiphanies of the Greek Empire sacrificed a pig on an altar in the Temple back way before Jesus' time, a few hundred years before Jesus' time actually. Antiochus Epiphanies is considered to be a precursor or type of the Antichrist, meaning when the Bible teaches about the Antichrist who will

come in the future, we're to look at Antiochus Epiphanies as a forerunner type. We can look at him and kind of know what the Antichrist will be like. But, Daniel 8:14 has been fulfilled in history. The Maccabean Revolt cleansed the Temple and everything was done with that prophecy, but no, Camping runs with that verse and he finds hidden spiritual meanings in it.

Another example of Camping spiritualizing Scripture is when he read Revelation 11. This chapter talks about two witnesses for Jesus who during the first half of the seven year Tribulation that is coming up will be witnesses for Him. They will be in Jerusalem and they will share the Gospel with the world for 3 1/2 years. The chapter says the Antichrist will kill them, but after three days the Lord will resurrect them. No, says Camping, those witnesses aren't real people but are the Church, and God is going to kill the Church!

As a side note, whenever these groups whether they are date setters or cults, they always feel that the Church needs to be kicked around by God to cleanse it. There is something wrong with the Church they believe and God needs to purify it, as if Christ's blood alone doesn't purify us from our sins as the Bible says. But, no, the Church has it coming to them they believe. These guys base their interpretation of end time events based on the Church needing to be beat up by God for awhile to be cleansed, whatever that means.

Camping also takes Bible verses and he just chops them up, throws them into a blender so to speak, and he gets whatever he wants. He takes little bits from here and little bits from there and he glues them all together and that's also how he comes up with his interpretations. Now, proper interpretation is called hermeneutics, which is the art and science of interpreting the Bible. There is a right way and there is a wrong way, and these date setter guys, well they go the wrong way. You just don't take Bible verses out of context. You don't spiritualize them thereby giving them any meaning you want. And, you don't take historically proven events and say they must be all future. Camping does all of that.

To top his bad interpretation off, Camping being an engineer which is his background, loves numbers. He loves to play with numbers. I'm sure Brian you've got emails from people going on ten pages long with all their calculations and astrology signs and moons telling you this meaning and that. Based on their calculations, they come up with these dates for when Jesus could come. Of course, the better ones will append, "We can't know the day or the hour just like Jesus said in Matthew 24." But, it is true, they play with these numbers and come up with their spiritualized views of what the Bible says, which is also how they come up with all their crazy numbers.

For instance, six times in Revelation it says that the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus — when Jesus comes back and rules on this earth for 1,000 years — will be just that, a 1,000 years. But, no, Harold Camping says the thousand is really almost 2,000 years because that is the length of the Church Age so far. He has mixed the Church Age which we are in now with the Millennium which is a future time period. So, that is the problem. I mean, any 5 year old could get in the Bible and do what Harold Camping does in messing interpretations up, throwing verses around, and taking whatever meaning they want out of the text.

Brian Thomas: Exactly! That reminds me of a saying that you all often quote at Lamb & Lion that I love that you say about those who spiritualize Bible Prophecy and don't take it literally: "When the plain sense makes sense, look for no other sense, less you end up with nonsense."

Nathan Jones: That is exactly right! That's what Harold Camping has produced — a lot of nonsense. And really, you'd think the last two times that he date set and got it wrong that he would have learned his lesson, but He instead continues to make nonsense.

All we have to do is go to Deuteronomy 18:21-22 where the Bible gives us the litmus test for false prophets. "You may say to yourselves, 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?' If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him."

I love that word from that passage — presumptuously. These false teachers presume they have some kind of inner knowledge that God has given them alone. But, God teaches in Deuteronomy how we can know if they're not true. You can tell if they create a date or a prophecy and it doesn't come true 100%, then we can know they are a false prophet. Well, Harold Camping is a false prophet. People should know that about him by now. His followers should have realized that after two failures, but some people have just put their faith in the wrong things.

Brian Thomas: That is exactly right as far as Camping's spiritualizing of the Bible. Once his prediction of May 21st of this year passed and there was no rapture of the Church and no return of Christ, then he kind of turned it around and declared something really did happen, but he was wrong in the literal sense. Jesus Camping said didn't return physically, but He returned spiritually.

In the next part of this series "Deadline October 21," Brian and I will navigate the twisted channels of Harold Camping's end time scenario.

### Part 3

#### Camping's Timeline

Brian Thomas: Let's now talk about Harold Camping's end time scenario. It is quite intriguing, or I guess I could call it sort of a "mad scientist" way of an end time scenario. Can you explain his time line and how he perceives things transpiring with end time events?

Nathan Jones: You are asking a lot of me, Brian! It's kind of like going into an insane asylum and trying to make some understanding of the ramblings of a crazy man. Fortunately, Dr. David Reagan the founder and director of our ministry here at Lamb & Lion has done a lot of research into this and if you go to our website at [lamblion.com](http://lamblion.com) and see the great article he wrote on this. He tries to make sense of that nonsense and he is a better man than me because I had a hard time going through it. So, instead of trying to repeat it into my own words, if I may I'm just going to read the five part of his end times scenario directly and let folks make sense of it themselves. We will all be scratching our heads by the end!

1. The Church Age ended on May 21, 1988 and the Tribulation began that day.
2. Between May 21, 1988 and September 6, 1994, the first six years of the Tribulation, almost no one was saved.

3. On September 6, 1994, God began to pour out His Spirit. This will result in a great end time harvest of souls during the last years of the Tribulation.
4. Since the Tribulation will last 8,400 days or 23 years, dating from May 21, 1988, the Rapture will occur on May 21, 2011.
5. Those left behind will be judged by Jesus for a period of five months, until October 21, 2011, at which time the world will come to an end.

Nathan Jones: To summarize, the first thing Camping says in his end time scenario is that the Church Age which we are living in now ended on May 21, 1988. He claims that was the day in which the Tribulation began. Even after 1988, he clings to that date and says that rather than a real thing happening, it was spiritual. So, the Church Age has ended — surprise! We were pretty young then, Brian, when the Tribulation began. We have been living in the Tribulation all this time and haven't even realized it.

Camping also says May 21, 1988, until September 6, 1994, was the first six year of the Tribulation. Now, the Tribulation for him isn't seven years long like the Bible says; it is 23 years to him. He also said no one was saved between '88 and '94. I worked at a Christian camp in 1993 up in Alaska, wonderful place, and I saw many, many kids come to the Lord, so his claim is total bunk.

Anyway, on September 6, 1994, Camping said God then turned around and again began to pour out His Spirit on the world so that we would have a great end time harvest of souls during the last days of this Tribulation we are supposedly living in. So, according to Camping, we've gotten six years of just nobody getting saved, and then all of a sudden God is pouring out His blessing and people are getting saved. Why, I have to ask?

The fourth part of his end time scenario is that the Tribulation would last 23 years. He takes the 84 months of Revelation 11:2 and 13:5 and says that 84 months of Tribulation is really 8,400 days, and that is where he comes up with his May 21, 1988, day for the rapture occurring, which we know it didn't.

Finally, after the Rapture Camping says that those left behind will be judged by Jesus for a period of five months, which will end on October 21, 2011. That is the date you and I are talking about. So, for the last five months since May, Jesus is judging us — right now!

How Camping can explain his five months of judging when we can go to the Bible and read about the Sheep-Goat Judgment portrayed in Matthew 25:31-46. This passage tells us that Jesus will literally be on the earth at the end of the Tribulation and He then separates the good people which he calls sheep and who have accepted Him as their Savior from the people who have rejected Him as Savior which are goats. The goats God sends to Hades to await the final Great White Throne Judgment. The saved "sheep" people get to live on into the Millennial Kingdom. For Camping to ignore all of that and figure that instead Jesus will come to judge and end the earth, well it's a different thing than what the Bible says will happen. To think that supposedly this very day up until October 21st Jesus is judging us and that the world will literally end this month. Remember that it's not this October that Camping is saying Jesus will come back, rather he is saying the earth will end this month.

Brian Thomas: Absolute nonsense, without a doubt! That's why again as you all state at Lamb & Lion Ministries, "When the plain sense makes sense, look for no other sense, or else you have nonsense."

Nathan Jones: Exactly!

Brian Thomas: Well, better you trying to go through Camping's end time scenario than me, because my head has been spinning from the time I first looked at it.

Nathan Jones: Indeed, the scenario is crazy. The problem with it is simple, like we said earlier, Camping takes the biblical numbers and just assigns random meanings to them. So, even if you look at his calculations and try to figure them out, you couldn't without some kind of index that tells you what each of these numbers must mean. When you see these numbers so taken out of context and transformed, you have to scratch you head and ask, "What could these numbers possibly mean?" Then you have to put all those meanings to the dates. Like you said, the numbers make your head spin. They just make no sense whatsoever. You might as well read the ramblings of a crazy man for it would mean just as much.

Brian Thomas: Right, exactly!

### **End of the Church Age: May 21, 1988**

Brian Thomas: How did Harold Camping arrive at his date of May 21, 1988? He claims as you stated that was the end of the Church Age. How did he come to the conclusion that the Church Age ended in 1988?

Nathan Jones: Oh, that is just as convoluted as his other calculations. Again, he took Daniel 8:14 where it tells about the 2,300 days which was fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanies and he just goes ahead and takes the word "days" and says they must be years. He just runs with years for no reason! He comes up with this theory from Daniel 8:14 that it will be 2,300 years which he believes started in 457 BC until when he thinks the Temple will be cleansed, meaning the purging of the earth by fire at the Second Coming of Jesus. If you calculate 2,300 years from 457 BC you get all the way up to 1994 which is when he claims is the re-establishment of the first Year of Jubilee.

The institution of the first Year of Jubilee is the very key to Camping's entire thinking. You remember that from when Joshua crossed the Jordan River, every 50 years after that the Lord declared that Israel needed to celebrate a Year of Jubilee. That year would be when people would give their land back to the original owners and forgive each other's debts, and so Israel would have this cleansing so to speak every 50 years. Well, Harold Camping looked at Israel becoming a nation again in 1948 and decided that the Year of Jubilee would be 50 years after that. So, get this, for a guy who loves math so much, he came up with 1994. Now, even I can calculate that 50 years after 1948 would be what? 1998! So, for some reason 1994 is the Year of Jubilee to Harold Camping and that is when the Lord began to pour out His Spirit and save people after a dry spell.

To summarize, Camping has said then that the last part of the Tribulation will be identified by a great multitude which will be saved and that is because the Year of Jubilee happens. The first 2,300 days of Daniel which he says are really 23 years would place the Tribulation from 1994 to 2011. Then he comes up with this idea that well since the Church was established on the Day of

Pentecost, then the day before Pentecost must mean that is the last day of the Church Age, and that is where he gets May 21st for 2011 being the day of this year for the Lord's return. So, we put that all together and we get the Tribulation beginning May 21, 1988, until the Rapture occurs (occurred?) on May 21, 2011. So, according to Harold Camping, we have been actually living in the Tribulation since 1988.

Brian Thomas: That'll make your head spin. There really is no other way to respond to that.

### **Return of Christ: May 21, 2011**

Camping seems to love the day of the 21st. We can see that pattern pretty clearly at least. It brings us to his scenario of this year May 21, 2011, being the date for the Rapture of the Church. After his first prediction in 1994 failed, he then came up with May 21, 2011. How did he come up with that date? Before you answer that question, now is probably a good time for a clip of a CBS News Report that was given three days prior to his May 21st prediction:

Harold Camping: You and I are living at the time of the end of the world.

Reporter: 89 year old Harold Camping says his 70 year study of the Bible leads him to believe God will destroy the earth starting May 21st, 2011.

Harold Camping: There is going to be a huge earthquake that is going to make the big earthquake in Japan seem like a Sunday School picnic.

Reporter: The founder of Family Radio in Oakland heard in 48 different languages around the globe has begun a worldwide multi-million dollar campaign to let people know... billboards up all around the US and several other countries. An atheist group calls it a crock and has begun a counter campaign with billboards denouncing the prediction and plan to party hard that day.

Harold Camping: To be candid about it, I am kind of happy for it because it calls attention to us.

Reporter: There is the Mayan prediction of a world ender coming in 2012. Hollywood gave that a big PR bump with a movie. A joke says Camping who has also gone into the multi-media business has a cartoon to help parents explain it to the kids.

Cartoon: This date —May 21, 2011 — is extremely important as it will also be the first Day of Judgment, a time of horrible death and destruction for all those who are left behind.

Man: Just in case this doesn't happen, can we do an interview with you the next day?

Harold Camping: It is absolutely going to happen. There is no way I could schedule an interview because I won't be here.

Brian Thomas: So, there you have it from the mouth of Harold Camping himself. So again, my question is how did he come up with this date of May 21, 2011?

Nathan Jones: The Bible gives us a lot of detail concerning the length of the Tribulation. The length of the Tribulation is seven years long, described in a variety of ways as "one seven" year block (Dan. 9:27), half called "times, time and half a time" (Rev. 12:14), consisting of two "1260 days" periods (Rev. 11:3), or two "42 month" periods (Rev. 11:2; 13:5). So, the Bible in many different ways of telling us that the Tribulation will only last 84 months total, or for a total of seven years exactly, if you take the months as 30 day months which is typical of the Hebrew calendar.

Instead, Camping takes the 84 months and he tacks on two zeros and says it is instead 8,400 days to make the Tribulation 23 years long, not seven years long. The Rapture Camping said would occur May 21, 2011, because that is the 23 years of the Tribulation which he predicted would begin on May 21, 1988. See how he created that first wrong date and now he is building his entire math on that wrong date and producing even more wrong dates? He is just compounding the problem with his calculations.

For those who do not know what this Tribulation we're talking about is, it's a seven year timespan reserved for the judgment of God. He promised in the Bible that He is going to pour out his judgment on the earth, 21 different judgments to be exact, to shock people into turning back to Him. Believers in Christ who are the Church won't be here for the Tribulation. We will be raptured. The scriptures containing 1 Thessalonians 4:17 says we will be caught up and we will be taken away to Heaven. The old Latin word is rapio where we get the term Rapture. We will be taken up to Heaven so we won't be here to suffer through the Tribulation.

For those seven years the earth will face a punishing judgment. Half of the world population will be destroyed during just the first 3 1/2 years. Most of the ecology will be destroyed until Jesus returns. It will also be a terrible time of persecution on the world, especially for the Jews, which will open the eyes of many Jews and turn them back to Christ. The Bible says a third of them will accept Jesus as Messiah.

Harold Camping says we are in for 23 years of Tribulation and technically it should have been over this May, but he got the number wrong. Now, I don't know about you, but I haven't seen comets falling from the sky poisoning the waters and turning it into blood. We haven't seen massive world wars that have killed half the world population. We have had bad wars, but not that bad. We haven't seen a one world ruler which the Bible calls the Antichrist come on the scene. We haven't had all of the fresh water going bad. We don't have plagues. The Bible even talks about demons being released and punishing people with stings for five months, which obviously hasn't happened. Speaking of five months, it's another date that Harold Camping runs with, too. Clearly, since 1988 we have not been living in this type of world chaos. Right there should tell people that his math is just totally wrong.

Brian Thomas: Absolutely! As you said, that goes along with how Harold Camping just loves to play with numbers. You mentioned earlier that he is former engineer and he has that in his background. He just loves to play with numbers and he combines that with Bible prophecy and he just throws all these crazy scenarios out there. I guess he is able to convince some people because obviously he has a large following. Camping has these numbers that on the surface look like they make some sense, and so people just accept his calculation and accept what he says and they go along with it.

Nathan Jones: You hit the nail on the head, Brian. Because most people cringe at the math, we just accept them. It is interesting by faith we accept Christ as Savior and that is great because

He is perfect and He is God, but to do that with people and have 100% faith in people that have been proven wrong in the past, you can't have that kind of faith. I mean you can't have that.

Using numbers to overwhelm people is just what Camping does. He is such a profound thinker and he has all this great math so that he overwhelms you. That is typical of a cult. They will overwhelm you with too much information, and you think, "Wow! This guy must be really smart. I can't figure it out, but he's got to have it right." So, Camping's followers put all their faith in him and they believe in whatever he says.

In the next part of this series "Deadline October 21," Brian and I will put Harold Camping to the test to see if he is in truth a cult leader.

## **Part 4**

### **Reinventing Matthew 24**

Brian Thomas: In Matthew 24:36 Jesus Christ stated that only the Father knows the date of His return. Now, for Harold Camping, how does he reconcile this? How does he make the Scripture coexist with his date setting theory considering that Jesus Christ said that only the Father knows the date of His return?

Nathan Jones: Camping believes that was a temporal command for a temporal reality. God alone knew, but that was only for a limited amount of time. Now Camping knows! As a matter of fact, you can go to Camping's website at [wecanknow.com](http://wecanknow.com) and see a scrolling bunch of verses at the top of the page. Each one is about how God will give us this understanding of the return date in the end times. The site has Nehemiah 8:8 which says He causes them to understand the reading. Also, Luke 24:45 explains how He open their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. Another one on the site is Isaiah 30:20, "Yea shall not thou teachers be removed into a corner anymore, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers."

Camping got his view from these misapplied scriptures that in the end times just before Jesus comes that a certain group of people will be given the knowledge that Jesus said only the Father has. Supposedly our eyes will be opened. Now, of course, who is the person whose eyes are opened? It's not everybody; its only Harold Camping. Ta-da! He's the one. Camping just takes these verses well out of context. He's developed his idea that the knowledge about the return of Christ is his and his alone to interpret. God has given him this special blessing of understanding so that the world can know when Jesus is returning, but only through Harold Camping.

### **Creation of a Cult**

Brian Thomas: You said that you believe that what we see here going on with Harold Camping is the emergence of a new cult leader for that is what cult leaders do. They will often spiritualize Scripture in order to brainwash their followers into believing in the things that they are teaching. Here's a clip of what Harold Camping's response was following the failed prediction of May 21, taken on May 22nd by the BBC News.

Harold Camping: We were convinced that on May 21 our God would return here in a very physical way, that is by bringing a great earthquake and by ushering the final five months of the Day of Judgment. And, the fact is when we look at it spiritually we find that He did come. He did come. Now, let me back up, the fact is you are going to find out that I am going to be saying there isn't a new date. There's not a new date. We've already been talking again and again about the end of the world being October 21, in 2011, October 21, but we have not emphasized that because of the first down payment or the beginning of it was the fact that we would see all these things happening and usher into a five month period of very, very terrible times.

Reporter: Are you willing to publicly apologize for what you have said about May 21, for your mistake?

Harold Camping: I can if people want me to apologize, I can apologize, yes. I did not have all of that worked out as accurately as I should have, or I wished I could have had it. That doesn't bother me at all, because I am not a genius, and I pray all the time for wisdom and when I make an error, I say, "Yes, I was wrong." I have said that already more than several times tonight. I was wrong. It was to be understood spiritually, not physically, and yet the sense of it is still the same: That judgment has come. Your world is now under judgment where it was not prior to May 21. Spiritually there is a big difference in the world that we can't detect at all with our eyes, but we can know from the Bible.

Brian Thomas: So what do you say, Nathan? Sound like a cult leader to you?

Nathan Jones: Oh, absolutely!

Before the May deadline we had James Walker of Watchman Fellowship at our ministry. James is great. His whole ministry is about dealing with the cults. He was actually a fourth generation Mormon until he studied and realized that Mormonism is a cult. James listed four ways to define a cult and if I might read them:

1. They add to God's Word with new Scripture.
2. They subtract from who Jesus is.
3. They multiply the requirements for salvation.
4. They divide their follower loyalty.

So, if you are asking if Harold Camping is a cult leader, based on that criteria I would say definitely. Under number one, the idea that only he has special knowledge from God and he knows the date and time despite what the Bible says and he adds to his Scripture with all his interpretations that are clearly not contextual, then yes he falls under that first definition of a cult.

Does Camping subtract from Jesus? Yes, I would say he does that, too. In one of his books he says that the Archangel Michael is the Lord Jesus Christ. The book is *The End of the Church Age and After* which Camping put out in 2002. If you want to find that quote it's written on page 56. He even claims that Jesus isn't just the divine Father, and though he does attribute divinity to Jesus, he says he is the Archangel Michael which is a very cultish thing to claim.

Does Camping multiply the requirements for salvation? After he said that God washed his hands of the Church in 1988, he deemed afterwards that every church denomination out there was apostate because there shouldn't be any more churches. What he did was call for all people to leave their churches and join his ministry. It is not a church per se, but they do things like church. They get together, they worship, and they do everything else a church does, but by any other name, right? Still, he calls it a ministry. So, if you join his family ministry then you are good and you will be saved, but if you go to these other churches like the Baptist or Methodist or Lutheran or whatever, then you are not saved. That is a very cultic claim right there. Cults always claim that they have special knowledge and you have to join them in order to be saved.

Also what cults do is they divide their follower's loyalties, as James Walker said, and clearly he is doing that. He is telling people to leave their churches, to leave their fathers, and to put their faith in him and not their faith in Jesus Christ per se. That is a very cultic philosophy as well. So, if we go by Watchman's Fellowship's four definitions of a cult, then I would say, yes, he follows every single one of them to a "T."

Brian Thomas: I agree about Camping dividing peoples loyalties. That reminded me of a report of a lady I think who on May 2nd passed away. When her will was read it was found that she had actually left \$350,000 to Harold Camping's ministry and left absolutely nothing to her family. That is indeed another sign of a cult leader.

Nathan Jones: Definitely! Sadly, with cults it always comes down to money. There is always some bottom dollar figure that they are trying to get to, and they will keep people strung along for their money.

Now, I have to admit that Harold Camping is a different odd bird. People could really see after the May 21st date this year came and passed that there was just something wrong with him. He looked physically shaken, like there was something wrong about May 21st ending up uneventful. I don't know his heart, but I truly believe that Harold Camping genuinely believes in all his numbers and figures and that he is especially assigned by God to have special insight into all this reserved information.

But, it's true, most of the cults exploit God for their own personal gain. They're in it for the money. You can even see that pattern in the Old Testament when all the false prophets would come and mislead the people. They pretended to speak for God for the wealth or fame or power. It is a sad thing. In this case, there is definitely a financial side to what Harold Camping is doing, and a very lucrative financial side at that.

Brian Thomas: Yes, exactly. Another characteristic you often see with cults are suicides. Unfortunately, in 1994 after Camping's failed prediction, a man committed suicide. Then this year there was a 47 year old lady in Southern California who attempted suicide by slitting the wrist and throat of her 11 and 14 year old daughters. Fortunately, someone found them before they bleed to death, but that is again another sign of a cult leader when you see people committing suicide as a result of their teachings.

Nathan Jones: It brings me back to those horrible pictures of Jim Jones. They all drank the Kool-Aid and when people came and found the camp there were Jones' followers dead all over the place.

A number of years back if you remember there was a cult out in California who thought a space ship was coming to take them away. They were all sitting on their suitcases ready to go, but when it didn't happen they all killed themselves. That was the real sad thing story.

People today and I guess people throughout all the generations want hope. They want to know that this earth isn't all there is. And so, they will put their faith whole-heartedly into everything but the Bible, or maybe in something quasi-Bible. And when some prediction doesn't happen just like with William Miller's The Great Disappointment, despair is what they get in return. They get sucker punched by their great disappointment and declare, "My leader has betrayed me! The Lord has betrayed me!" And, what hope do they have after that? They feel like there is no future and ask, "What can I believe?" Either they become despondent or they lose all faith in God altogether, or even worse they kill themselves. That is such a sad thing. I can't imagine the severity of judgment that will fall on these false prophets when they stand before God one day.

Brian Thomas: Oh, you are so right there. And, the ones who don't commit suicide, well a lot of them will probably never trust a pastor again. They will turn away from Christianity altogether, which that is a sad thing to do. For these cult leaders who are causing people to turn away from Christ, yes, I think there is definitely a great judgment awaiting them for some time in the future.

Nathan Jones: These false teachers, when it comes to teaching about judgment themselves, get that wrong as well. For instance, Harold Camping teaches in his book The End of the Church Age and After that when an unbeliever dies he will be judged by God and then be annihilated, so he doesn't even teach about Hell. Rob Bell also came out with a book recently that teaches that there is no Hell. Cults will try to teach you that there is no punishment for your sins that is going to be terribly bad. I mean, really, nothing is bad about annihilation. Atheist also have that desire to just wink out of existence and be annihilated.

But, the Bible teaches very prolifically about the reality Hell. We're told it's a place of eternal punishment. It is a place where you are separated from God and so you are lonely. It is dark and you can't see anything. It's where you have this feeling of falling all the time. It has this awful smell. There you exist trapped with you regrets. Great pain comes with being sentenced there, for it is called Torment. It is called the Lake of Fire for a reason, as there is burning and suffering. Hell is very real, and yet in our society today we have kind of pushed Hell off as a joke or a place where Satan is ruling, which is not the case. Hell was originally created for Satan and his demons according to Matthew 25:41.

These false teachers give people a universal false hope in Heaven, but also steal away their understanding that their sins matters. There is Hell to pay for our rebellion against God, for without accepting Jesus' sacrifice on their behalf we are all still under God's wrath and sentence to the Lake of Fire, as John 3:36 warns us. It bothers me how cults steal the reality of Hell away from those who are lost.

In the next part of this series "Deadline October 21," Brian and I will look to October 21, 2011 as being the end of the world, or not.

## Part 5

### End of the World: October 21, 2011

Brian Thomas: We looked at Camping's prediction of the May 21st date for Christ's return and it came and went and nothing happened. Camping now has October 21st circled, and again some people out there who are deceived are looking at that date and thinking that something is going to happen. Who knows when this date comes and goes if there will again be more suicides or attempted suicides.

Harold Camping also has a lot of propaganda out there. From my understanding his Family Radio organization had actually created a cartoon back before the May 21st prediction that explains to little children what is going to happen as far as life ending as we know it. So, they are deceiving people on all levels. Now there are some who are nervously sitting and waiting for October 21 to come.

So, what comments or advice could you give to those people concerning what it to come and the way we should approach this October 21st end of the world deadline?

Nathan Jones: I remember after May 21st the one of the things that bothered me the most was the number of Atheist parties where they celebrated Christ not returning. Jesus returning was a huge joke to them. Atheists are the perfect example of 2 Peter 3:3 where says, "First of all you must understand in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, 'Where is this coming He has promised? Ever since our fathers have died everything has gone the same as the beginning of creation.'" And, the Bible says in verse 5, "But they deliberately forgot that long ago by God's Word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water." In other words, they say the Creation didn't happen, so this prophecy points to Evolutionists, to Atheists, and to these scoffers. Peter also says in verse 10 about the destinies of these scoffers, "the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire being kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction for ungodly men."

What Christian hasn't at some point asked, "Why, Lord, haven't you come? Why is it taking so long?" Well, 2 Peter 3:9 tells us, "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promises as some understand slowness," (you know, as we humans do), "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." So, for those who are scoffing out there, well they're going to have a party about this no matter what. They have refused the truth, or as the Bible says they themselves have decided to become willfully ignorant by deliberately forgetting about God and about His Creation.

The scoffers will scoff about anything related to Bible prophecy. The media will love to have a party when Camping's October 21st day comes and goes. I can be pretty sure this October 21st they won't have as big of a party as they did on May 21st where the celebrating was in all the media and all the news just bashing the Bible. It was so sad to see those people out there laughing as if they had escaped.

We can be sure when the Bible says that the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire for those who do not believe Jesus is coming that He will indeed come. Jesus will come in His own time and not the time of Harold Camping, nor the time of other men. Only God knows and the Bible tells us that Jesus will come. The earth is reserved for fire for after Jesus finally comes and takes His Church out of here. The scoffers will then endure the Tribulation, that awful seven years of judgment that will come on the world. During that time men will surely know there is a

God and they will need to decide one way or another. The choice will be crystal clear as to whether to side with God or not.

If there are folks out there who haven't accepted Jesus as Savior, my advice is please don't listen to these nuts like Harold Camping. Obviously they are false prophets, and obviously they mean to lead you astray. The Lord has a purpose for you. He died on the cross for your sins. He loves you so much that He was willing to sacrifice His Son. Jesus then beat death by coming back to life. If we put our faith in Him, we can be saved.

We might not know the date for when the Lord comes back, but we can prepared for it. This is the number one thing you should prepare for — if you are not a believer in Christ you can prepare for the Lord's return by accepting Jesus as your Savior. Jesus will return, the Bible promises. Prepare by giving your heart and your life to Jesus Christ.

For those of us who are already saved, don't listen to false teachers like Harold Camping. Obviously, don't put all your money and your efforts and your faith in a man who according to Deuteronomy 18 is a proven false prophet. He is not a real prophet. There is no reason to put you faith in that man. Instead, put you faith in the Bible. Put your faith in Jesus Christ.

You don't have to know all the in's and out's Bible prophecy. Guys like Brian and I love to understand more about the Lord's return, but even we have to admit that we don't have all the answers. The Lord didn't give us all the dates and times and settings. So, we just have to trust that the Lord will come back and not beat ourselves up trying to find the exact date or moment.

Live your lives holy. Live your lives right before God. I have kids and I don't know how many times I've walk in and they are doing something they know they shouldn't be doing and they give you this guilty look. You know that look. Oops, they are doing something wrong. We don't want to be looking like that when Jesus returns. When our Heavenly Father comes for us, what will you be doing? Will we be serving Him as the Bible says we're to be doing, doing those good works which He prepared for us to do? Or, are we just living for ourselves?

We have to devote ourselves not only to holy living, but in sharing the Gospel as well. There are so many people out there who need to know the Lord. The Lord is actually waiting for the last of those who will accept Him as Savior in this Church Age to accept Him. Again, as 2 Peter 3 said, "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." When everyone who is to be saved in the Church Age accepts Jesus' salvation, then He will come. That is what we are waiting for. And really, thank goodness for that, otherwise if he came even 40 or 50 years ago I wouldn't even exist today, so thank the Lord for His patience!

So, give your heart to the Lord. Devote yourself to holiness. And, devote yourself to evangelizing and sharing the Gospel with others.

Brian Thomas: For the believers, the truth seekers out there, who believe in Bible prophecy and study and are looking for the return of Jesus Christ, do not allow this kind of deception with Harold Camping and the fallout from the media to cause you to stray away from proclaiming the soon return of Jesus Christ. He is coming back soon. Many who are out there would just throw us all in the same category as Harold Camping and say we are just fanatics and are crazy. Don't allow them to deter you.

I'm concerned that a lot of pastors will choose to stay solid against the message of the Lord's soon return and not preach about it in churches because they don't want to be categorized as a

lunatic. But, Jesus Christ is coming again. You have to just stand on the truth of His Word and not listen to these date setters like Harold Camping.

To all of you out there, Jesus Christ is coming soon. So, be hopeful, be watchful, keep looking up for His soon return is drawing near. Many blessings to you all!

**End of Program**