

What Family Radio Teaches

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Introduction

Family Radio is a listener-supported broadcasting network based in Oakland, California. It was founded in 1958 by Harold Camping and two associates. His world-renowned program, Open Forum, began a few years later where callers ask a question about the Bible and he attempts to answer with information primarily from the Bible. The program can be heard in dozens of languages around the world mostly via radio (140 stations), two television stations, and their website www.familyradio.com (A Brief Biography of Harold Camping).

While Camping was formerly a member of the Christian Reformed Church, he has turned away from traditional Calvinism (A Brief Biography of Harold Camping). He teaches free-will in that humans are free to choose between good and evil and their acceptance into heaven is based on this decision. He also teaches annihilationism which is typically identified with Jehovah's witnesses. This is the belief that there is no Hell after death. Rather, if one is not accepted into God's kingdom, he or she is forgotten and ceases to exist in any form; physical or spiritual.

Most significantly, perhaps, Camping believes that we are currently living in the tribulation predicted by Bible prophecy to come before the Day of Judgment and (as some theologians believe) the Rapture. Additionally, the Churches are currently being governed by Satan and they must be abandoned. He went on to say that the Rapture would be on September 6, 1994 but that if it did not happen then, the end would be in 2011 (1994?). Camping is now 100% certain that the Rapture will be on May 21, 2011 (We are Almost There!).

Calendar of Bible History

Camping became widely known when he published a book titled "Adam When?" in 1971. In this book, Camping outlines to the exact date when all of the major events in Biblical history occurred. Many of them are very important but are so numerous that I will not give their derivation here. Rather, I encourage the reader to examine them if confirmation of a date is needed when analyzing the proofs outlined below. Some critical dates include Christ's death on April 1, 33 AD and Noah's flood on April 8, 4990 BC. The world was created in six days in the year 11,013 BC (Adam When?). This is in contrast to the more widely accepted date of 4004 BC calculated by Bishop Usher. Camping also suggests an unpopular chronology of the end times where the Rapture occurs after the great tribulation so Christians will have to suffer through it like everyone else.

Proof that the End is Nigh

In his book “We are Almost There!” Camping explains his proofs for the Rapture being on May 21, 2011. There are many proofs but I have isolated 3 here so you can understand his logic. The first is his main argument while the others are supporting evidence. Camping places special significance on specific numbers and their relationship to Christian concepts.

Proof 1

The year of Jubilee will be in the midst of the great tribulation. 1994 was the first Jubilee year after Israel became a nation in 1948. There will be 2,300 days during which an evil king will rule and the Bible will be replaced with Satanism. That places the start of the great tribulation in 1988. Jacob went into a tribulation of his own in 1877 BC. 1877BC and 1994 are 3,870 years apart. $3,870 = 3 \times 1,290$. This is significant because Israel was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC. This is exactly 1,290 years after Jacob’s tribulation and 2,580 years before 1994. $2,580 = 2 \times 1,290$. To God, a day can be the same as a year (Numbers 14:34). Daniel 12:11 says that there is a significant time of 1,290 days (which would be years).

This can get confusing, so follow closely because this is the proof. 1877 was about 30% of the way through Jacob’s tribulation. 587 BC was about 30% of the way through the 70 years of tribulation Israel experienced through the Babylonians. So too, then, 1994 divides the great tribulation into two parts, 30% of which occurred between 1988 and 1994. The great tribulation should then encompass the number 7 as well. 7,000 would be the expected number but it could also be $7 \times 12 \times 100 = 8,400$ days. As Camping says, “Spiritually, the number 100 signifies ‘completeness’ and the number 12 signifies ‘fullness’” (We are Almost There! Page 42). This is 23 years which is the number for God’s wrath.

The first Pentecost (and the beginning of the Church AGE) was on May 22, 33AD. The Church Age lasted 1,955 years. Thus, the exact end of the church age would be one day before Pentecost which is May 21, 1988. 2,300 days later (the first part of the great tribulation) was September 7, 1994. This is the first date Camping predicted the world would end. After this there would be 6,100 days left of the tribulation ($8,400 - 2,300 = 6,100$). The 6,100 days end on May 21, 2011. The last day on earth is on the Feast of Tabernacles, October 21, 2011 which is the day the Earth will be destroyed. God will punish the unsaved for the 153 days between May 21 and October 21 (We are Almost There! Page 45).

Proof 2

The 1,978 years between Christ’s death and Rapture is further evidenced by the following equations (We are Almost There! Page 62):

$$2011 - 33 = 1,978$$
$$1978 = 2 \times 23 \times 43$$

Where: 2 = those who are to bring the Gospel.
23 = wrath
43 = judgment

Camping further discusses the significance of the 1,978 years in a follow up publication titled "Another Infallible Proof." 1,978 years is equal to 722,449 days. Add the remaining 51 days between the 1,978th anniversary of Christ's death on April 1, 33 AD and May 21, 2011, and one gets 722,500 days. $722,500 = 5 \times 10 \times 17$. 5 is the number for the atonement, 10 is the number of completion, and 17 is the number of the Rapture.

Proof 3

The last 6,100 days of the great tribulation have seen an increase in the number of Christian converts. This added to the number of days between the Rapture and end of the world (153 days) is 6,253. This is significant because $6,253 = 13 \times 13 \times 37$. The number 13 is the end of the world and the number 37 is God's judgment. God killed 185,000 Assyrians once and $185,000 = 1000 \times 5 \times 37$. This is no more than a coincidence (We are Almost There! Page 63).

Camping offers two supporting documents titled "Another Infallible Proof" and "Gay Pride: A Sign of the End." In the former, Camping argues that the flood of Noah occurred in 4990 BC which is exactly 7,000 years before 2011. Now, God gave Noah 7 days of warning and 2 Peter 3:8 tells us that "**one day with the Lord as a thousand years.**" Thus, God was really telling Noah that the world would be destroyed 7,000 years from that day (Another Infallible Proof).

The latter discusses Biblical situations where peoples who practiced homosexuality were destroyed by God. While this text does not derive the specific date of the Rapture, it is offered as proof to skeptics that we are now in the end times and that Christ's return is imminent (Gay Pride: A Sign of the End).

I encourage readers to read the other proofs to understand why Harold Camping is so certain that we are very near the date of the rapture. The bigger question, however, may be about salvation. Who will be saved and who will not be?

Who shall be Saved?

Camping divides humanity into three categories: True believers, false believers and non-believers, and those who could not believe. The true believers are those who have read the Bible with enough faith to realize that the Church is currently under Satan's authority, not God's. True believers may not know the exact date of the Rapture but they know they are in the end times and that when the date does come (and it is imminent), they will be Raptured. They are ready to receive Christ.

Naturally, those who have heard of Jesus yet have not believed are not saved and will go into the wrath. They will no longer exist after October 21st. However, even believers in Christ will not be saved if they are members of the Church and are not prepared to receive Christ imminently. These are not true believers and to them, Christ will "come like a thief in the night." These people will suffer the same fate as non-believers.

But what of those who have never heard of Jesus? Here Camping returns to his Calvinist roots. He articulates his belief well, saying “Throughout the history of the world, there are those who have lived and died without ever having heard or read any words from the Bible. And because **‘faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God’** (Romans 10:17), we must believe that none of these people were elected by God to become saved.”

Answers to Christian Criticisms

On his radio show, many Christians call in and ask about two specific verses. These two passages are often used even by those who believe the world will end in their own lifetime to say why they do not believe in “date setting.” In the first, Jesus tells the apostles:

“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.” Acts 1:7

From this passage, one could assume that Jesus was speaking to not just the apostles but to the whole world for all time. Yet the very next line says this:

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8

Camping suggests that even the wisest of holy persons could not know when the end was to come. It was a physical impossibility as God blocked their minds to that knowledge. Their mission was to spread the Gospel without worrying about the rapture. God had to give them enough time (thousands of years) to complete this task. Now, Camping has “received power” to read the scripture’s true meaning (No Man Knows the Day or the Hour?).

In the second, Paul writes to the Thessalonians about the “Day of the Lord” saying,

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” 1Thessalonians 5:2-3

The passage goes on to say that brothers and sisters in Christ are not asleep in the night, but are awake in the day. Camping suggests this is a reference to the churches who at the end of the Church Age will no longer be teaching the word of God. They will be blind to the “facts” that have been revealed to true believers. Thus, when the Day of Judgment is revealed to true believers, the vast majority of Christians, who are still in the church, will deny it. When that day comes, it will seem as though God came as a thief in the night.

Finally, Camping directs us to the book of Daniel where many modern end-times prophets like Tim LeHaye and Jerry Jenkins derive critical events.

“O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. And He said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” Daniel 12:4 and 9

Here we learn that there is either a book or an understanding of the Bible that will not be revealed until the end of the world (No Man Knows the Day or the Hour?). This verse is also used by Jehovah's Witnesses in pamphlets and fliers to suggest that more of God's plan will be learned after the end of the world. On a side note, May 14, 1948, the day Israel was once again declared a sovereign state, a great deal of knowledge became known to true believers. The scriptures and calculations that led to the date of the Rapture could not be known before then (We are Almost There! Page 37).

Thus, the precise chronology of Earth history, including its end, can be known with 100% accuracy. Those who do not know it cannot be saved if they are not true believers. They will enter into Judgment Day and experience a horrible wrath of God until the world ends and a New Jerusalem is built on October 21st. Those who have righteous faith and are wise will be with God in paradise on May 21st.

References

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Note: anything left uncited can be heard almost daily on his radio show Open Forum.