

# “But Of That Day And Hour...”

(Matthew 24:36-39)

- Introduction:
1. Jesus is coming again!
  2. His return is a central truth within Christianity, and it provides us with the motivation to be urgent and faithful with the stewardship with which we have been entrusted.
  3. However, history is sprinkled with “date setters” and “prognosticators” who have attempted to set a date to his return.
  4. Thus far, every attempt to set a date for his return has failed.
  5. However, if you haven’t heard, there are many people who have concluded that Jesus is returning next Saturday, May, 21, 2011.

## I. Is May 21, 2011 The Date Of Jesus’ Return?

- A. According to Harold Camping, Jesus is returning on May 21, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.
  1. His return will begin at the International Date Line, approximately the Fugi Islands, and he will work his way around the globe, appearing in each time zone at approximately 6:00 p.m.
  2. This will mean that most of the world will hear of his coming before it ever reaches them, but they will not be able to repent because all chances of repentance will cease when his return begins.
  3. According to Camping, on May 21, the faithful will be raptured out of this world, leaving the rest of humanity in a terrible tribulation for the next five months. Then when October 21 comes, the Lord will destroy the earth.
- B. A simplified explanation is offered below.
  1. God’s judgment upon the world in the days of Noah was preceded by a “7 day warning” (Genesis 7:4).
  2. According to 2 Peter 3:8, “a day is as 1000 years” to the Lord.
  3. Thus, it is concluded that from the date of the flood (allegedly 4990 B.C.), we have been given 7 days (7000 years) warning.
    - a.  $4990 \text{ B.C.} + 7000 - 1$  (for the year “zero”) = A.D. 2011.
  4. The flood began on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month in the year 4990 B.C., and according to the biblical calendar, May 21 is the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month.
- C. This is the basic line of reasoning for his timetable, however he also offers the following collaborative evidences.
  1. The number “5” means “atonement,” “10” means “completeness,” and “17” means “heaven.”
  2. Christ hung on the cross April 1, 33 A.D. That’s 1978 years till to April 1 of 2011 A.D.
  3. If you multiply 1,978 by 365.2422 days (the number of days in each solar year) and add 51 days (the days from April 1 to May 21) you get 722,500.
  4.  $(5 \times 10 \times 17) \times (5 \times 10 \times 17) = 722,500$ .
  5. Or put into words: (Atonement x Completeness x Heaven), squared brings you to May 21.

## II. Problems With Camping's Prognosis

- A. Time and God.
  - 1. It is a terrible misuse of 2 Peter 3:8 to conclude that, the Lord in this context is providing a time frame for the return of Jesus.
  - 2. This passage is simply intended as an answer to the skeptics in Peter's day who were scoffing at the idea of Jesus' return by saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?"
  - 3. In response to this scoffing Peter is simply saying God is not bound by time. What seems like a long time to us is a short time to God. The passing of time cannot mitigate against God's promises.
- B. Literal or Figurative.
  - 1. The way in which Mr. Camping approaches the Scriptures is reversed.
  - 2. Instead of looking at a passage as literal, he first looks at it is figurative.
  - 3. What is there in the "7 day warning" given to Noah prior to the flood that would cause one to conclude that this verse means there will be 7000 years till Jesus returns?
  - 4. Approaching Scripture in such a fashion makes nonsense of the Bible.
  - 5. If the literal sense makes good sense, seek no other sense lest it result in nonsense.
- C. Marks of a False Prophet
  - 1. Camping also predicted that Jesus would return in 1994. He was wrong.
  - 2. (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

## III. What The Bible Teaches About The Return of Jesus

- A. He is coming again (Acts 1:11; Matthew 24:44).
- B. The time of his coming is a mystery (Matthew 24:36, 42).
- C. There will be no signs concerning his coming (Matthew 24:37-39; 2 Peter 3:10).
- D. The creation will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-13).
- E. The dead will rise (John 5:28-29), the living will be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51-52), and all men will be judged (Matthew 25:31-46).

- Conclusion:
- 1. Might Jesus return on May 21, 2011? Absolutely! But it won't be because of someone's convoluted calculations, but because of God's unrevealed, sovereign choice.
  - 2. In view of this, how should we live (2 Peter 3:11-12).
  - 3. Friends, remember this one thing. Jesus is coming again. One day the sun will rise for the very last time. One day you will hear your very last sermon. One day you will be given a final opportunity to respond to the gospel, then the end will come.
  - 4. Are you ready?