

# Faith on the Edge

Exploring the Biblical & Scientific Case Against the Flat Earth

## The End of the World and the Flat Earth

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“The end of the world is here!” said many a devoted follower. They were selling their homes, their cars, and all of their possessions to get ready. Some of the money was going to purchase billboards and to buy books to spread the message before it was too late. Who were these people? They were a large group of Christians who’d become 100% convinced that the world was ending on September 6, 1994.

Harold Camping owned the Family Radio Network, and he had written a book called *1994?* that foretold the end of the world. Not only did he publish the book, but his “end of the world” message was being proclaimed to millions of listeners via Family Radio, which was the largest radio network in the world at that time.

How do I know? I was right in the middle of it all. I had become the Western District Station Coordinator for the company. As I traveled to different cities, I would encounter groups of Christians who’d strategize about how to reach those that had not yet discovered the truth. At that time *In and Out Burgers* had a billboard campaign in which there was real smoke emanating from large plastic burgers. I remember being at one meeting in which these end-of-the-earthers were strategizing on how to purchase billboards with smoking earths with the words, “The world ends in September of 1994.”

The message was conveyed with absolute confidence. The only place that there was a question mark was on the title of Harold Camping’s book, *1994?*. Otherwise, it was presented as an airtight “Biblical” case.

One of Camping’s main mantras was that we must use Scripture to interpret Scripture, that we could never add man’s reasoning to the Word of God. And when he spoke on the radio, or you read the book, his arguments were chock full of Scriptures. He stayed true to his mantra, that every Scripture was interpreted by other Scripture. For that reason, his followers were passionate about the message of *1994?*; they became evangelists of it.

Since this belief was based on hundreds of Bible passages, followers elevated the idea itself to the level of the inspired Word of God itself. In their minds, to deny that the world was ending on

September 6, 1994 meant that you would not accept the clear truth of the Scriptures. Deniers were labeled as being more concerned about what the world thought than the clear message of the Bible. Anyone that disagreed with the idea was labeled as apostate, and in some cases, no longer considered a Christian brother.

Harold Camping would oftentimes state that no one had been able to refute the Bible's clear teaching that the world would end in September of 1994. At some point I realized that I could no longer work for Family Radio, and actually partnered with a friend to write a little booklet debunking the whole idea. Others did a much better job in pointing out the flaws in their thinking. But the followers would pay no attention to these attempts. In their minds, since these Christian leaders did not agree with the end of the world, then obviously they were making wrongful attacks against the Bible itself, and therefore could be tossed aside as apostates. For this reason, there was no argument that could convince the people of this movement that they were in error. Any evidence brought against them was considered invalid.

There was, however, an absolute truth from the real world that was about to collide with their belief -- it was a date on the calendar! Thousands of Christians gathered around the world on September 6th, 1994. Excitement grew, knowing they would be with Christ before the day was done. What an exciting thought. But then midnight came...and went. Some were starting to have a crisis of faith. Soon Camping took to the airwaves to reassure them that the date had actually been September 29th, then he switched again to October 2.

When it was clear that Camping had been wrong, I called him on his live national talk show. I read an article about a young man who had been so disillusioned that he committed suicide. I wanted to hear him apologize to all the families whose lives had been radically changed by his teaching. Instead of an apology, he explained to his followers that they had been right after all. God had intended to destroy the world in September of 1994, but because they had faithfully got the word out to the world, God had "repented", and would wait until later.

While many finally came to their senses, others continued believing that Camping was right. This dumbfounded me -- in the clear light of undeniable truth, instead of rejecting their false worldview, they simply adapted their beliefs so they could still claim themselves as having been right. Wow! In the end, Camping made over 13 different predictions about the end of the world, claiming each one to be directly from the Scriptures themselves. After 1994, you would think no one would listen. But his prediction of October 21, 2011 went viral. This time he got more media attention than ever before. Unfortunately, the Word of God was blamed for being wrong.

It's just a reminder that whenever man elevates his own ideas about God's Word to the level of being Scripture itself, it always leads to spiritual damage. Many were severely disillusioned. Some rejected Christ. There were those that had to put their lives back together. And, once again, the Bible was blamed for an idea from a man, and God made to look foolish.

Fast forward to today. I believe more Christians are converting to the idea that the earth is flat than any other time in history. Kyle Justice and I recently released our new documentary, [\*Faith on the Edge: Exploring the Biblical & Scientific Case Against the Flat Earth\*](#). As we've been researching this project, we've spent hundreds of hours talking to those that believe that the Bible says the earth is flat. Along the way, these conversations started to sound familiar.

Once again, here's a group that has built a case using Scripture. They are not open to using "personal experiences" to interpret God's Word. They take the Bible literally and are willing to believe what seems like foolishness to man in order to follow Christ. On the outside it looks very Biblical, and for that reason many are convinced that it is true. Like those who followed Camping, we can see how passionate they've become -- evangelists of the flat earth.

Recently we got this comment on one of our YouTube posts,

"If someone does not clearly understand that the earth is stationary and flat, then they simply do not understand the Bible. Anyone that has really been born again, understands the scriptures, this is what the scriptures tell us. Those that don't understand the Bible, and think that the earth is a spinning ball as described by people who are God haters, (atheists) (scientists) have not been born again, and are the same as those atheists they have put there faith in, and are really enemies of God. It doesn't matter how much they think they are saved, how long they have been pastors, Bible teachers, church elders, or whatever. The fact is they have not been born again, and are not saved, and are trying to understand the Bible with their corrupted, evil minds, and have gotten it all wrong."

This is just one of hundreds of messages we've received like this. When I read it, it reminded me of those days back in 1994. As you can see, their interpretation of the Scriptures has been elevated to the inspired Word of God, itself. In some cases (like the comment above), some will cast a person aside as an apostate for disagreeing. Any Biblical or scientific evidence against their model is automatically labeled as invalid (simply by the fact that it disagrees), and is not taken into consideration.

And just like there was an absolute truth that finally revealed the error in Harold Camping's teachings, there is also an absolute truth that shows the flat earth to be wrong. There've been observation after observation that shows us that the earth is round. Kyle and I saw it when we were part of the team that launched a weather balloon 22.75 miles into the atmosphere. We measured the drop away of the horizon. We saw the curvature in our experiment at the mouth of the Columbia River. We have many pictures from high altitudes and even from space. There are pictures of bridges curving over long stretches of water. And just like how the date passed for the end of the world, and many continued to believe, so the flat earthers continue to dismiss the many and clear observations that the earth is round. It is our contention that God's Word and His world must be in complete harmony -- He is the author of both (In regards to the Scriptures, see our article titled, "The Biblical Case Against the Flat Earth").

Sadly, this story has been repeated hundreds -- if not thousands of times -- throughout history. There is an enemy that wants to bring error and division in the Church. And there have been countless doctrines, built on Scripture, but shown in the end to be false. That is why we must be careful to heed the message of 2 Timothy 2:15...

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth* (emphasis mine).”

All of us must be absolutely sure we are understanding God's Word in the way he meant us to understand it -- not ever adding man's ideas. Just like those that claimed the world was ending in 1994, what happens to those that have become convinced that the Bible says the earth is flat? Once confronted with the truth of God's creation will they become disillusioned? Will they believe that God lied? This is why we much be careful as Christians to pray that the Lord will help us to “rightly divide the Word of God”.