



Unity Church of Christianity
Prophecies
May 22, 2011

Howard Caesar

I want to begin by saying that I have a prediction to make: the world is not ending, and the earth is not going away. As time goes on, there will be more disasters and crises. Jesus said, “In the world, you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world,” and you and I will too. We will be able to stand back and move through whatever it is that happens in the physical realm.

I also predict that good things are in store for humanity, as the nature of God is good. There will always be demonstrations where God is doing His creative handiwork. I hold for that as we stand and persevere in faith and trust in the activity of the Divine.

I also think that one of the things we’ll be doing is learning to detach from a lot of what is happening physically out there and stand in our deep knowing. Even as time goes on, people will continue to die, babies will continue to be born, old systems will fail, new systems will have to be created, and not too much of anything remains the same. Everything is in a state of flux, but also moving toward a greater good.

Unity Church of Christianity

Prophecies

May 22, 2011

Page 2

We just dealt with some current-day prophecy which said that the world was coming to an end on May 21, 2011. It received worldwide exposure. There were those who believed it and those who scoffed at it.

I have to ask, what do we all think about this idea of prophecy—especially doomsday prophecy and the frightening implications that are there? I know that many of you didn't accept it or believe it, but all of you were called into some kind of a response. Were you conscious of what that response was and where it originated from within you? We are all on a spiritual path and have some kind of a response to things like this that come out and seem negative or frightening. We respond based on where we are in our own spiritual evolution and development, according to our belief system and understanding.

So if you believed the prophecy, that's okay—just know why you did. If you did not believe the prophecy, also know why and be in touch with that. If you're somewhere in between, that's okay too. If you were just hoping and wanting not to believe, that's good to get in touch with.

What is it in your belief system and the foundation of your spiritual thinking? What is it about God, life, death, endings, beginnings, science, theology, and philosophy that contributed to you taking a position about it? Maybe it was instantaneous, but are you in touch with what it is that took you there?

Just so we're all on the same page in understanding what we're talking about, there is a man named Harold Camping who is 89 years old and is an Evangelical Christian broadcaster. He is the head of the Christian radio network, Family Stations Inc. He predicted that the judgment day and the end of the world was to take place on May 21st. Apparently it didn't matter that Jesus had already told us about this—if it's going to end, no one will know the day or the hour.

Camping had predicted once before, in 1994, and was wrong. He had said his calculations were off, so he went to work correcting them. He may be back doing that again. He said he was absolutely sure this time. He said there would be earthquakes around the world and it would activate the Rapture, thereby sweeping true believers to heaven and leaving others behind for a period of torment, which would last for five months. It would conclude in the end of time.

His radio station broadcasts to 66 stations in the U.S. and more than 30 languages with international affiliates. He covered a lot of the world with this message. Millions of his dollars were spent on radio broadcasts and billboards and pamphlets and missions. All of that doesn't settle well with me. What it really does is turn people off to organized religion. It turns me off to organized religion. He may be well-meaning and sincere, but it's unfortunate that there are such extreme elements in every sector of life out there. It's kind of like the Florida pastor who felt that he had to make it a world event that he burned the Koran. It's just a shame that some of those things go on.

Harold Camping's calculations are referred to as kooky. Even other doomsday prophets say he's giving them a bad name. What sets him apart is that he actually sets a date, even if it opposes

Unity Church of Christianity

Prophecies

May 22, 2011

Page 3

Jesus. Some of his calculations said that May 21, 2011 marked 7000 years since Noah's Ark and the Flood. He dated the number of days since Jesus' crucifixion to be 722,500 days. He then took what he called the "square of atonement" times "completeness" times "heaven." I don't know how you arrive at what he arrived at, but somebody should have known along the way.

As long as I've been a minister I've seen books and writings and people who have the doomsday message. It's been there a long time. Historian Nicholas Guyatt, of the University of York, has authored a book titled *Have a Nice Doomsday*. Historians of this kind of thing report that there were prophets who have been predicting the end of time for hundreds of years.

One of the best known examples was in 1844 in America. Back then there was something known as The Great Disappointment of 1844. There was a Baptist preacher named William Miller. He predicted that the Second Advent—the end—would come October 22, 1844. He had many followers—over 50,000 people. Of course it didn't happen, and the result was a great deal of ridicule including church burnings, vandalism, and even tar and feathering. Pastor Miller continued to await the occurrence he had predicted until his death five years later. His theology actually contributed to the establishment of several denominations including Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. They pulled away from setting exact dates though.

Some of you are familiar with the *Left Behind* series. It sold millions worldwide several years ago. It is an apocalyptic book series about the end and includes 16 novels that provide a fictional account of the end times. It talks about what it calls the pre-tribulation dispensationalism, which starts with some believers instantly disappearing in the Rapture and leaving the others to fight it out with the Antichrist. One of the co-authors, Jerry Jenkins, acknowledges with his own words that he is "one of those kooks who really believes it's going to happen one of these days."

As a teaching moment, I want to say that this does not fit the theology of Unity. That's not what we teach or what it's about for us. Allow me to also define a few terms as we go forward talking about prophecy and things like that. For instance, the word apocalypse has several contexts. One is hidden literature. As it relates to the end times, apocalypse means a revelation, as in receiving a trance or a dream or a vision about the end of the world. That's why the Book of Revelation is considered an apocalypse. Not all scholars agree that the Book of Revelation is about the end of the world, but that's a subject for another time.

Then you have the word rapture. Most of you know of the meaning of the word. It's used as an event that many Christians believe will happen on judgment day or the day that Jesus will physically return. He will return to earth to separate believers from non-believers. Unity does not teach this either. We do not believe that this is what Jesus or God is really up to or wanting to be about because God and Jesus are not about separating out. There's a sense that there is an equality to all of us as spiritual beings. We're told scripturally, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." Jesus' beatitudes states, "Blessed are the merciful." I believe that that represents that Jesus and God together are merciful. The word rapture also comes from the writings of Hall, and many of the details have been completely made up by theologians and are

Unity Church of Christianity

Prophecies

May 22, 2011

Page 4

not in the Bible. The word rapture and the ideas around it first appeared as recent as the nineteenth century.

The other word is doomsday, and that's pretty self-explanatory. It just represents the end times and isn't specific to Christianity.

Another teaching moment that I want to approach has to do with the *Left Behind* series, where it says that the Antichrist will come and take on those who are left behind. I just want to say that the term Antichrist was never used by Jesus. It was only used by Paul a couple of times. It was only in the Epistle of John. In two of the instances he's talking about a deceiver or a person who does not believe that Jesus actually came in the flesh. That means anyone who believes that, not a single entity as is often portrayed—that the Antichrist is a being out there trying to get you.

Here are a couple of versus I'll read to you. The first one is from Second John, the Epistle. "For many deceivers have appeared in the world who do not acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Such a person is a deceiver and an Antichrist." Another one from this Epistle was, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son."

In Unity we do not believe that there is an entity that is the Antichrist. If anything, we would describe the Antichrist as the ego—that which edges God out, that which argues for separation in us, and that which denies the higher self. We could say that hate is the Antichrist because Christ is about love. We could say the idea of separation is Antichrist because Christ was about oneness. In all of our daily dealings and spiritual growth, Christ is what we want to be, and Antichrist is what we tend to be when we're in fear, hate, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, or any of those things that are not characteristic of the Christ nature.

If there is an enemy to be had, it really is ourselves. We have to face that. It is the self of us that has been allowed to move into a state of consciousness of separation from God and all that comes with that. The self that is of God is of oneness and the Christ nature.

Humanity is prone to fear. It's easier to slip into something negative than something positive. It's just human nature. Your spiritual nature, if you're really invested in it, will take you higher. It will always be the voice of truth that takes you into something more solid, true, and fulfilling.

People that were hooked into these prophecies sold their farms, gave away everything, and quit their jobs. They were well-meaning people, and it was very sad. Harold Camping had a net worth of up to \$122 million. In 2009 he had something like \$80 million. I wonder if he sold everything when he went into the final day.

This is a time in our history that is particularly well-suited for those doomsayers. There is a lot going on in our world today that could be labeled "crisis." There are a lot of things that aren't that pleasant. In the last 10 or so years, there has been 9/11, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, other terrorist activities, tsunamis, the oil spill, the Japan earthquake, historically increased

Unity Church of Christianity

Prophecies

May 22, 2011

Page 5

number of tornadoes, droughts, floods, worldwide financial crisis, the Mississippi flood, and many other things. People recognize that things are changing in the world and many have concluded that the world is a more dangerous place to live now. It may be that our days are numbered. Some people are easily swayed into that on the basis of building this kind of a case.

That's why it's so important to find support that stabilizes you, and a spiritual community that balances all of that and brings you back to a perspective that helps you see and understand. It doesn't drain you and leave you lost in fear and allow the voices of ego and separation to take you into these places and make bad decisions in life.

The 21st century has begun with a good bit of natural disasters and technological crises. There are things that we have always counted on to go right that have seemingly gone wrong. It is said that this century will have various crises with a bit more frequency. One of the reasons for that is because we have engineered the planet. Our little fingers are all over the planet. We have built vast networks of technology that are vulnerable—they're subject to fail. We have more cities and systems because there are simply more people on the planet.

It has been stated that we are not having more earthquakes; it's just that we have more people with more stuff that happen to be in the way of where the earthquakes are happening. In the year 1800, Beijing was the only city on the planet with more than one million people. As of today, there are over 380 cities on the planet with more than one million people. That's the difference. People have populated into areas where they're more vulnerable.

If a person really wants to have something to worry about, they can. The earth is posing threats. Some would call climate change one of those. There is the super volcano in Yellowstone. There is a large asteroid that could land in an ocean and cause a mega tsunami. There is a supernova—a star explosion—that scientists say could happen in 100 light-years on earth. Our galaxy is also on a collision course with the Andromeda Galaxy and is supposed to collide in two to five billion years. In 1.4 billion years, the intensity of the sun will cause all life on earth to be impossible. Let that keep you awake at night if you want something to worry about.

We can humor ourselves about that and it's not productive or helpful. Listen to the voice of intuition as you are led to make decisions in your life going forward. In Ecclesiastes it states, "The earth shall abideth forever."

Prophecy has always been around. Jeremiah was a prophet in the Old Testament. He prophesized that because of the way they were moving away from God, their punishment would come from the north. And it did, in the form of Babylonia. It would take over Jerusalem. No one liked Jeremiah because he had a bad message, but it happened, and Jerusalem was taken over. He also said that it would be restored, which it was.

There are prophets everywhere. We can say that your physicians are prophets. They look at your symptoms, lifestyle, diet, and exercise. They'll say that if you stay on this track, this is what you can expect. A financial planner could say that if you don't change anything, this is what you're

Unity Church of Christianity

Prophecies

May 22, 2011

Page 6

going to have when retirement comes. A business consultant can predict success or failure based on the choices you make.

Jeremiah was measuring consciousness to say that the law of cause and effect will happen. We really are our prophet when we step back, listen, and become sensitive to the voice of intuition—that something inside of us that knows if the path we're on is right or wrong. Sometimes we listen to the voice's exterior.

There is so much communication reaching to all the edges of the earth that never did before, and that shifts the energy as well. It's important that we get healthy and appropriate communication out there. Every twitter that tweets and every Facebook update and every blog posting has some impact on the voltage of that current having more power in the masses.

The answer is to keep things in perspective, because there will always be things going on. Anderson Cooper will always be in a disaster zone somewhere. Jill Carol, our friend, had a wonderful article in the Belief section of the *Houston Chronicle*. She said that Harold Camping's predictions offered us a lesson, which is that life as we know it will end for some people on that day. Some people died, some people had a loved one die, some people got a terminal diagnosis, and some were involved in accidents. But that can happen on every day. She pointed out that the present moment is all that we are guaranteed in this life. If we became more conscious of that we would give up our grudges and get our priorities straight and live our lives with a greater sense of intention.

Notice if the things that are happening in the world are causing you to become more fearful and pessimistic. How are you holding up and dealing with it? Dust off the rust of the trust that you need to have in God. Notice to what extent you really trust God, and dust the rust off the trust in God.

All of us need to step into that place where we trust that we're more than a physical body and understand that we need to establish our true identity as a spiritual being and embrace that spiritual self. Trusting God and knowing who and what we are is essential to spiritual beings moving through a world with a lot of hazards—physical, mental, and emotional hazards. If we're strong spiritually, we will remain strong. We have to realize that God is a God of life always. That presence and power is always there loving you through. As you engage in it, it will always move you forward.

We have the Prayer of Protection which says, "The light of God surrounds you. The love of God unfolds you. The power of God protects you. The presence of God watches over. Wherever you are, God is." What more do you need to know than that?