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The Ultimate Deadline

Time is running out. I am feverishly writing this piece, hoping that it will be completed and published, because I will die at any moment.

Why? The end of the world will occur sometime between September 15th (Did you note we're still here?) and the 28th.

Yes, the end is nigh again. (*Yawn.*) I suspect I'll survive this doomsday like all the previous ones.

So what has set off the doommongers again? Before it was Y2K screwing up all the computers, then some stuff about the Mayan calendar running out of days.

This time we have the omen of a blood moon and a group of asteroids that will smack the shit out of the Earth.

Why hasn't anyone learned from previous doomsdays that the end will come like a thief in the night (unlike the cable TV guy who never shows up in the morning).

With that question in mind I did some quick Google research to see what the experts had to say.

The top Google hits went back to 2011 when octogenarian Bible scholar Harold Camping said the world was going to end that year. He divined this knowledge from his close interpretation of the Holy Book (apparently he glossed over the thief in the night bit). Camping first predicted the cosmic crap hitting the celestial fan on May 21st.

May 22nd rolled around and guess what didn't happen. So no doomsday then? Not for a committed doommonger like Camping who dug deeper into his research. He now claimed both the Rapture and the Apocalypse would occur on October 21st, a two-for-one special.

You know the rest.

Camping did put an interesting twist on his doomsday scenario. The world would be destroyed by a series of earthquakes traveling from time zone to time zone. [1] Destruction would first occur on May 21st, 2011 in the time zone that saw 6 PM first (Did that calculation include Daylight Savings Time?). So long, Pago Pago. We hardly knew thee.

According to CNN Camping raked in some dough. Suckers -- oops, I mean followers -- donated to Camping \$80 million from 2005 to 2009. [2] Some of his followers were

left penniless. After all no need for money after the Rapture. Might as well donate Junior's college education fund -- he'll never finish his freshman year. (That did happen.)

So here we go again, a new doomsday, a new circus.

Why do people fall for the End Times deception?

Lorenzo DiTommaso, a professor of religion at Concordia University, observed that doomsday believers try to reconcile two conflicting beliefs. [3] People believe the world is a bad place, that humans can't find solutions to many great problems. On the other hand a "cosmic correction" will prove that there is meaning to existence, a Final Reward will be provided. Doomsday isn't chaos: it's proof of order.

Shmuel Lissek, University of Minnesota neuroscientist, echoed the comforting aspects. [4] She gave the example of someone anticipating a painful experience like an electric shock. Once the pain has passed the person can relax (unless we're talking about the Executive Monkey). Knowing the future takes away uncertainty. Doomsdayers can focus on a common goal, preparing for the Big Finale.

I remember survivalist Kurt Saxon made a comment on his radio program many years ago. He was annoyed with wacko conspiracy theories and the people who believed in them.

He cited the example of the little old lady who lives alone, waiting for the day the government would round up everyone and put them in concentration camps. In such a camp, Kurt said, she would have no more responsibilities. No uncertainty.

Or as I sum up: Free at last.

[1] **The Rapture Is Not Saturday; It's Tonight** - Tina Dupuy May 20, 2011

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2011/05/the-rapture-is-not-saturday-its-tonight/239177/>

[2] **Harold Camping called "liar" who made 'Doomsday' money on defaced Wiki page** - By Hao Li on May 21 2011

<http://www.ibtimes.com/harold-camping-called-liar-who-made-doomsday-money-defaced-wiki-page-706711>

[3] **The Draw of Doomsday: Why People Look Forward to the End** by Stephanie Pappas, Live Science Contributor Date: 16 May 2011

<http://www.livescience.com/14179-doomsday-psychology-21-judgment-day-apocalypse.html>

[4] **Psychology Reveals the Comforts of the Apocalypse** By Daisy Yuhas | December 18, 2012

<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/psychology-reveals-the-comforts-of-the-apocalypse/>