

2012 - The end of the world?

The 2012 hysteria has produced a doom boom that has been fueled by a series of television programs and the recent Hollywood blockbuster film.

It all relates to a calendar developed by the ancient Mayan civilization that was centered in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. Their society flourished from about 250 to 900 AD, when it experienced a sudden, unexplained collapse.

The Mayas developed an advanced society that featured large cities built around stepped pyramids that also served as temples. They excelled in mathematics and astronomy. Combining the two, they produced a series of 20 different types of calendars. It would not be an overstatement to say that the Mayas were calendar-obsessed.

Their calculations were incredibly accurate. Without the help of calculators, computers, or telescopes, they were able to determine the length of a lunar month to be 29.53020 days. The actual length is 29.53059 days.¹ Their solar year was calculated to be 365.2450 days minus an error of .002. Modern calculations put it at 365.2425 plus an error of .0003.²

The Mayas had three main calendars.³ One was a solar calendar that was based on 20 day months. The second was a ceremonial calendar that was related to the 260 day cycle of Venus. It was their third measure of time, the Long Count Calendar, that was related to the year 2012.



A Mayan Calendar

The Long Count Calendar was a measure of "world age cycles" that repeat over and over again. This calendar was divided into five units or cycles that started with the mythical date for the creation of the Mayas — August 11, 3114 BC. The fifth cycle was supposed to end on a date that corresponds to December 21, 2012 on the Gregorian Calendar that is used in the Western World. Since the calendar ends on that date, some modern day interpreters have jumped to the conclusion that it marks the date for the end of the world.

The man who put 2012 on the map as a pivotal date for world history was José Arguelles, a Mexican-American, who authored a mystical book in 1987 titled *The Mayan Factor*.⁴ He was also instrumental that year in organizing a worldwide event called the Harmonic Convergence.⁵ During two days in August, people were urged to gather at sacred sites to awaken the "energy grid" of the world and thus initiate a 25-year era of spiritual growth that would culminate in 2012.

Since that time, a man by the name of Christian John Meoli has been organizing and conducting 2012 conferences that have the flavor of a Star Trek convention. He plans to hold the final conference on December 21, 2012 at the Mayan pyramids in Mexico. He describes 2012 as "the shift," and the slogan for his conferences is "Shift Happens."⁶

Meanwhile, the History Channel on television has promoted the 2012 craze with a zeal, broadcasting a whole series of programs focused on the date: "Mayan Doomsday Prophecy" (2006), "Last Days on Earth" (2006), "Doomsday 2012: The End of Days" (2007), "Seven Signs of the Apocalypse" (2009), and "Nostradamus 2012" (2009).

Other Apocalyptic Factors Related to 2012

There are other factors that are fueling the 2012 hype. One is the fact that the same date, December 21, 2012, allegedly marks the first time in thousands of years that the galactic alignment of the sun and earth with the center of the Milky Way will occur.⁷ Some have theorized that this cosmic event will cause the earth's poles to reverse, resulting in major catastrophes.⁸

Also causing concern is the prediction by the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) that 2012 will be a peak year for the sun's cycle, resulting in a very dramatic increase in solar flares.⁹ Estimates are that the next sunspot cycle will be 30% to 50% stronger than the previous one in 2000. If correct, the years ahead could produce a burst of solar activity second only to the historic Solar Max of 1958.

To no one's surprise, the Nostradamus fans have also jumped on the 2012 band wagon. In 1994, Italian journalist Enza Massa was at the Italian National Library in Rome when she stumbled upon an unusual find. It was a manuscript dating to 1629, titled: *Nostradamus Vatinicia Code*. Michel de Notredame, the author's name, was on the inside in indelible ink. This manuscript, never published by Nostradamus, was handed down to the seer's son and later donated by him to Pope Urban VIII.¹⁰

The book is full of bizarre images and mystical quatrains. Its contents have not yet been completely revealed to the public, but there are rumors all over the Internet that it contains predictions of the end of the world in 2012.

And then there is the *Bible Code*. Michael Drosnin, the author of the book that popularized the code, states that the words, "earth annihilated" appear in correspondence with the year 2012.¹¹

Finally, there is the Web Bot Project that was started in 1997. It was originally created to predict stock market trends. But it has expanded in recent years into a program that claims to be able to predict future events by tracking keywords entered on the Internet.¹² When the date, December 21, 2012, is entered into Web Bot, the prediction emerges that there will be "a cataclysmic pole shift in 2012."¹³

The Counter Arguments

There is not a single academic Mayan scholar who has endorsed the idea that the conclusion of the fifth cycle of the Mayan Long Calendar will signal the end of the world. In fact, they have mocked the idea as nothing more than an Internet urban legend.

Dr. Sandra Noble, the director of the Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, has pointed out that there is no declaration in Mayan literature that the end of the world will occur when the Long Calendar ends its fifth cycle. On the contrary, she says its conclusion would most likely have marked a time of celebration for the Mayas and the launching of another five cycles of the calendar.¹⁴



The Mayan stepped pyramid at Chichen Itza
(ecotravelmexico.com)

Keep in mind too that the Long Calendar has been interpreted in various ways by the scholars. Some have deciphered its ending date to be anywhere between December 21 to December 27 in 2012. But others have calculated the end date to be either in 1957 or 2050.¹⁵

Establishing a specific date and linking it to an end-of-the world scenario appears to be the work of sensationalist hucksters and New Age mystics who have used the world's greatest rumor mill — the Internet — to create unjustified hysteria.

Regarding galactic alignment, again it appears that all the predictions of cataclysmic events are based on junk science. Academic astronomers have pointed out that the alignment will span a period of 36 years. That period began in 1998 with a convergence that was even more precise than what it will be in 2012, yet there have been no dire consequences.¹⁶

In contrast, the prediction of increased solar flare activity in 2012 is based upon solid science. Every 11 years the sun goes through what is called a solar cycle. During the peak time of this cycle, the sun's magnetic poles switch. This produces, in turn, solar flares which are pieces of the sun which are discharged into space, carrying with them radiation and strong electrical currents. They usually fall back on the surface of the sun. But sometimes a very strong flare, called a Coronal Mass Ejection, will shoot into space like a bullet. These flares can cause major power blackouts when they hit power grids.¹⁷

The prediction by the National Center for Atmospheric Research that solar flare activity could increase 30% to 50% over previous years is a legitimate cause for concern. It could result in large scale blackouts, and it could affect such things as satellite communication and cell phones.¹⁸

But even the scientists who have issued the warnings have not predicted cataclysmic results. And they have not proposed any specific date. In fact, one of the lead scientists for the National Space Science & Technology Center (NSSTC) argues that the maximum sun flare activity is more likely to occur in either 2010 or 2011.¹⁹

The Nostradamus "prophecies" are hardly worth mentioning. This man was a demon possessed practitioner of witchcraft. His so-called prophecies are poetic quatrains that are so obtuse as to be unintelligible. They have therefore never been used to prophesy any event before it happens. Instead, the Nostradamus groupies apply a quatrain to an event after it happens, and even these applications require a vivid imagination. In fact, the writings of Nostradamus are often doctored to make them more applicable as "prophecies." There is nothing in any of his published writings that has reference to the year 2012.²⁰

With regard to the Bible Code, I believe there is no doubt that there are mathematical wonders coded in the Bible that point to its supernatural origin,²¹ but I do not believe there are secretly coded prophecies that are hidden beneath the surface of the text. The prophecies God has revealed in His Word are clearly stated in the surface words. Serious Bible code researchers have distanced themselves from those like Michael Drosnin who try to use the codes like a crystal ball to predict future events.

Drosnin's Bible Code prediction about the earth being annihilated in 2012 must be considered in reference to the fact that when he published his book in 1997 he claimed that the codes predicted a nuclear war in 2000 or 2006 and a comet strike on the earth in 2006.²² These events failed to take place.

That leaves us with the Web Bot Project, which is the silliest bit of evidence that could possibly be presented. All this system does is catalogue the consensus Internet opinion on any given topic. It amounts to prophecy by majority opinion, and that opinion is derived from the Internet rumor mill!

Are We Near the End?

I think it is clear that all the 2012 hysteria is unfounded. But would it be accurate to say that even if the 2012 date is wrong, we could very well be near the end of the world?

Well, that all depends on what is meant by "the end of the world." The only reliable source of information about the future is the Bible. We know it is reliable because it contains hundreds of very specific prophecies about persons, cities, and nations that have already been fulfilled in history. It also contains 109 specific prophecies about the Messiah that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus of Nazareth.²³

The Bible prophesies the end of the current age, the end of the current world system, and the end of the natural world as we know it today. But it never prophesies the end of the world in the sense that the universe will cease to exist. In fact, it clearly states that planet earth will exist forever. Let's consider each of these in order.

The End of the Current Age

The Bible teaches that Mankind entered a whole new age on the Day of Pentecost in approximately 30 AD.²⁴ On that day the Holy Spirit fell upon the Apostles and they were empowered to preach the Gospel (Acts 2:1-4). Peter preached the first Gospel sermon, and the Church was established when three thousand people responded

and accepted Jesus as their Messiah (Acts 2:14-41). We have been living in the Church Age ever since.

The Age of the Last Days also began on the Day of Pentecost. The prophet Joel had prophesied that in the "last days" God would pour out His Spirit upon all mankind (Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17). When the three thousand responded to Peter's sermon, they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), and all believers have received that gift since that time. The writer of Hebrews referred to his day and time in the First Century as "the last days" (Hebrews 1:2). The Apostle Peter did the same thing in his writings (1 Peter 1:5 & 20). And the Apostle John called his day the "last hour" (1 John 2:18).

Before Jesus died and the Church Age began, He referred to His day as "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). He was referring to the period of time when the Jewish people would live under Gentile domination without a king anointed by God. That period began in 586 BC when Israel was conquered by Babylon, the Davidic monarchy was ended, and the Jewish people were carried away into captivity. This period continues to this day simultaneously with the Church Age because the Jews still suffer from Gentile domination, and their God-anointed monarchy has not been restored.

The Church Age will conclude when the Church is taken out of this world on the day of the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13- 18). The Second Coming of Jesus, approximately seven years later,²⁵ will mark the end of the Age of the Last Days. It will also mark the end of the Times of the Gentiles.

The End of the Current World System

At the end of the Tribulation, when the Second Coming occurs, the current world system will also come to an end. When I refer to the "world system," I am talking about the way human society has operated since Adam and Eve were ejected from the Garden of Eden.

All the societies of the world, despite their particular forms of government and their types of economies have revolved around the ego of Man. They have thus been characterized by unrighteousness and injustice and war. Greed has ruled supreme. Power has always corrupted. The dispossessed have been exploited. Winston Churchill perhaps summed it up best when he observed, "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Since the beginning of human history, people have yearned for a world of peace, righteousness and justice. Time and time again they have placed their hopes in politicians who have promised them the moon, and time and time again their hopes have been dashed. But the good news of God's Prophetic Word is that the current world system is doomed.

Jesus is returning to institute a radically new world system. It will be a theocracy characterized by the rule of the rod of iron (Psalm 2:7-9 and Revelation 2:27). He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords from Mount Zion in Jerusalem (Revelation 19:16). His Word will be the law of all nations, and it will be enforced worldwide by those of us who will be reigning with Him in glorified bodies (Isaiah 2:2-4 and Daniel 7:13-14, 18, & 27).

There will be no political parties, pressure groups or legislatures. Greed will be replaced with decisions based on fairness and equity (Isaiah 11:4-5). Vulgarity will give way to holiness (Zechariah 14:20-21). Poverty will be swallowed up in abundance (Micah 4:4). Righteousness and justice will be fulfilled (Isaiah 11:3b-5). Peace will flood the world as the waters cover the seas (Micah 4:3).

The End of the Current Natural World

Many Christians believe that at the end of the Lord's millennial reign the cosmos will be consumed with fire and cease to exist. A corollary of this is a belief that since the material universe will cease to exist, the Redeemed will live eternally in a non-material, ethereal spirit world called Heaven.

These beliefs are derived from a passage in 2 Peter 3 that says, "The day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). If that's all the Bible had to say about the matter, then we could rightfully conclude that the material universe will one day come to an end.

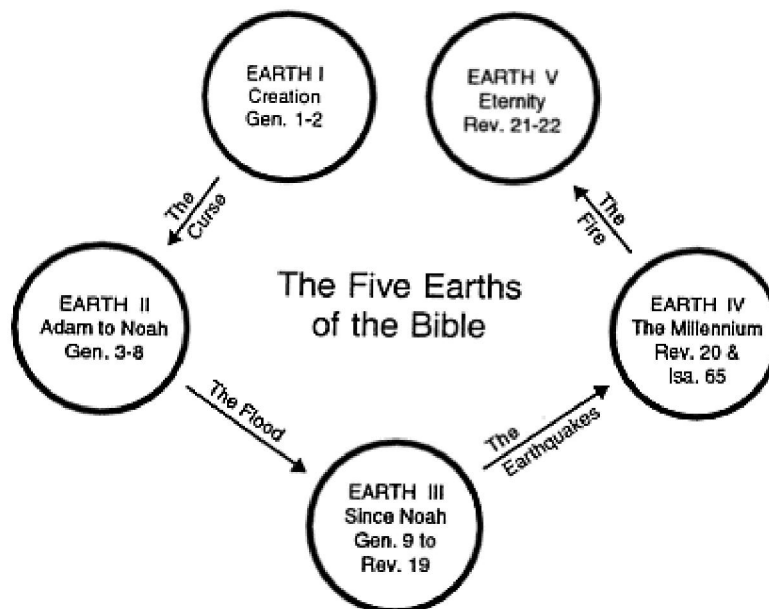
But a few verses later the same passage states that according to the promise of God (Isaiah 66:22), we can live "looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13). Further, the same passage refers to the original earth as having been "destroyed" by water (2 Peter 3:5-6). This does not mean that it ceased to exist. What it means is that the original earth was radically changed by the Noahic Flood. In like manner, the current earth will be destroyed by fire, meaning it will be radically changed, not that it will cease to exist.

This interpretation is sustained by the fact that the Bible teaches that the current earth is eternal: "Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever" (Ecclesiastes 1:4; see also Psalm 78:69 and Psalm 148:6).

Chapter 21 of Revelation affirms that the Redeemed will live forever on a new earth in the presence of God. As verse 3 puts it, "the tabernacle of God" will be "among men." In other words, Heaven will come to earth — to the new, renovated and perfected earth that has been cleansed of all the pollution of Satan's last revolt at the end of the Millennium.

A Series of Earths

Most people are surprised to learn that the Bible reveals that we are currently living on earth number three and that there are two earth stages yet to come.



Earth 1

The first earth was the one created in the beginning (Genesis 1:1). It was perfect in every respect (Genesis 1:31). But because of Man's sin, God placed a curse upon the earth (Genesis 3: 17-19).

Have you ever stopped to think what a "perfect" earth must have been like? There certainly were no meat-eating animals or poisonous animals or poisonous plants. All of nature was at peace with itself and with Man. Adam and Eve did not have to strive against nature in order to produce their food. And there were no natural cataclysms like tornados, hurricanes, tsunamis, and earthquakes.

The Bible indicates that the curse radically altered the nature of God's original creation. Instead of Man exercising dominion over nature, as originally planned (Genesis 1:26, 28), nature rose up in conflict with Man, as poisonous plants, carnivorous animals and climatic cataclysms suddenly appeared.

Earth 2

The curse radically altered the original earth, but the second earth was still quite different from the one we live on today. There is much biblical evidence in both Genesis and Job that the second earth had a thick vapor canopy which shielded life

from the ultraviolet radiation of the sun, contributing to the long life spans recorded in Genesis (see Genesis 2:5-6 and Job 38:8-11).

The whole earth was like a greenhouse with thick vegetation growing everywhere, even at the poles. There was also probably only one large land mass.

Once again the sinful rebellion of Mankind motivated God to change the nature of the earth (Genesis 6:11-13). The change agent this time was water. It appears that God caused the vapor canopy to collapse (Genesis 7:11). He also caused "fountains of the great deep" to break forth upon the surface of the earth (Genesis 7:11).

Earth 3

Like the curse, the flood radically altered the nature of the earth. It produced the third earth, the earth we live on now.

The earth tilted on its axis, forming the polar caps. The unified land mass was split apart, forming the continents as we now know them (which is why they fit together like a jigsaw puzzle — see Genesis 10:25). And the vapor canopy was so completely depleted that ultraviolet radiation began to reach the earth in unprecedented levels, resulting in greatly reduced life spans, first to 120 years and then to 70 years.

The Bible reveals that the current earth will be radically changed again at the Second Advent of Jesus. The change agents will be earthquakes on the earth and supernatural phenomena in the heavens.

The changes produced will so totally alter the earth and its atmosphere that Isaiah refers to "the new heavens and the new earth" which will exist during the reign of the Lord (Isaiah 65:17).

Earth 4

The fourth earth — the millennial earth — will be very different from the present earth. The earthquakes that will produce it will be the most severe in history.

Every valley will be lifted, every mountain will be lowered, and every island will be moved (Revelation 6:12-14 and 16:17-21). Jerusalem will be lifted up, and Mt. Zion will become the highest of all the mountains (Zechariah 14:10 and Micah 4:1).

The vapor canopy will likely be restored because life spans will be expanded to what they were at the beginning of time (Isaiah 65:20, 22).

Further evidence that the vapor canopy will be restored is to be found in the fact that all the earth will become abundant once again with lush vegetation (Isaiah 30:23-26 and Amos 9:13-14). The Dead Sea will also become alive (Ezekiel 47:1-9).

Most important, the curse will be partially lifted, making it possible for Man to be reconciled to nature and for nature to be reconciled to itself. The wolf will dwell with the lamb because the wolf will no longer be carnivorous. The nursing child will play with the cobra because the cobra will no longer be poisonous (Isaiah 11:8).

Earth 5

But Satan's last revolt at the end of the Millennium will leave the earth polluted and devastated (Revelation 20:7-9). Thus, at the end of the Lord's reign, God will take the Redeemed off the earth, place them in the New Jerusalem, and then cleanse the earth with fire (2 Peter 3:10-13).

In other words, God will superheat this earth in a fiery inferno and then reshape it like a hot ball of wax. The result will be the "new heavens and new earth" prophesied in Isaiah 66 and Revelation 21.

This will be the fifth earth, the perfected, eternal earth where the Redeemed will spend eternity in the New Jerusalem in the presence of God (Revelation 21:1-4). The curse will be completely lifted from this earth (Revelation 22:3).

Conclusion

There is no reason for you to fear the "end of the world" if you are a born-again child of God. You have the promise of living eternally with God on this earth after it has been redeemed and perfected.

But if you have never accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you have every reason to fear the future. The signs of the times given in the Bible indicate beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is about to return to take His believers out of this world in preparation for the pouring out of God's wrath during a period of seven years that the Bible refers to as the Tribulation.²⁶ It will be a time of unparalleled horror on this earth, so terrible, in fact, that one-half of humanity will die during the first three and a half years!²⁷

God does not wish that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). That's why He has provided us with signs to watch for that will indicate the season of His Son's return. We are in the midst of that season. We are living on borrowed time. Don't delay. Give your heart to Jesus today (John 3:16 and Romans 10:9-11).

by Dr. David R. Reagan

Notes

- 1) Lawrence E. Joseph, *Apocalypse 2012: An Investigation into Civilization's End* (New York: Broadway Books, 2007), page 12.
- 2) Synthia Andrews and Colin Andrews, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to 2012* (New York: Alpha, 2008), page 11.
- 3) Mark Hitchcock, *2012: The Bible and the End of the World* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2009), page 32.
- 4) José Arguelles, *The Mayan Factor: Path Beyond Technology* (Rochester, Vermont: Bear & Company, 1987).
- 5) Wikipedia, "Harmonic Convergence," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harmonic_Convergence, accessed October 16, 2009.
- 6) Pauline O'Connor, "12/12/12: The end of the world as we know it?" *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 2008, <http://theguide.latimes.com/general/12-12-12-the-end-of-the-world-as-article>, accessed on October 16, 2009.
- 7) Dan Eden, "The Real Doomsday? December 21, 2012," www.viewzone.com/endtime.html, accessed October 16, 2009.
- 8) Patrick Geryl, "Pole Shift & Pole Reversal in 2012," <http://survive2012.com/index.php/geryl-pole-shift.html>, accessed October 16, 2009.
- 9) NCAR News Release, "Scientists Issue Unprecedented Forecast of Next Sunspot Cycle," March 6, 2006, www.ucar.edu/news/releases/2006/sunspot.shtml, accessed October 16, 2009.

- 10) Mendhak, "The Lost Book of Nostradamus," www.mendhak.com/40-the-lost-book-of-nostradamus.aspx, accessed October 16, 2009.
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- 12) Wikipedia, "Web Bot," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_Bot, accessed October 16, 2009.
- 13) Andrews and Andrews, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to 2012*, page 162.
- 14) G. Jeffrey MacDonald, "Does Maya Calendar predict 2012 apocalypse?" *USA Today*, March 27, 2007, www.usatoday.com/tech/science/2007-03-27-maya-2012_n.htm, accessed October 18, 2009.
- 15) Mervin Stoddart, "Will the world end in 2012?" *The Jamaica Observer*, October 25, 2008, www.jamaicaobserver.com, accessed on October 6, 2009.
- 16) Jean Meeus, *Mathematical Astronomy Morsels*, (Richmond, VA: Willmann-Bell Publishers, 1997).
- 17) Richard Lowe, "2012: What's All The Fuss About?" www.december212012.com, accessed October 18, 2009.
- 18) Alfred Lambremont Webre, "2012 may bring 'perfect storm' — solar flares, systems collapse," *Fort Worth Examiner*, April 1, 2009, www.examiner.com, accessed October 18, 2009.
- 19) NASA, "Solar Storm Warning," March 10, 2006, http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2006/10mar_stormwarning.htm.
- 20) For more information about Nostradamus, see "Nostradamus Prophet or Charlatan?" by Dr. David R. Reagan, www.lamblion.com/articles/articles_cults9.php.
- 21) David R. Reagan, "The Bible Code: Is it for real, and if so, does it provide new evidence of the supernatural origin of the Bible?" www.lamblion.com/articles/articles_bible4.php.
- 22) Drosnin, *The Bible Code*, pp. 123-127, 153.
- 23) David R. Reagan, *The Christ in Prophecy Study Guide*, (McKinney, Texas: Lamb & Lion Ministries, 3rd edition, 2006).
- 24) Scholars have dated the Day of Pentecost in 30, 31, and 32 AD. A few have placed it as late as 33 AD. The consensus opinion is the year 30.
- 25) The Rapture does not mark the beginning of the Tribulation. The seven years of the Tribulation begin when the Antichrist signs a covenant with Israel. There could be months, or even several years between the Rapture and the start of the Tribulation.
- 26) David R. Reagan, "50 Reasons Why We Are Living in the End Times," www.lamblion.com/articles/articles_signs11.php.
- 27) David R. Reagan, "The Tribulation: What is it? What is its purpose," *The Lamplighter* magazine published by Lamb & Lion Ministries, January-February 2004.