

# 2012, the Bible and the End of the World

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Over the last few years, Americans have been bombarded with one huge concept that can be summed up on one little word: *change*. Both political parties, and most Americans, recognize that major adjustments are needed in the economy, education, and health care. If one is to believe the political pundits, big changes are on the way. But few people are prepared for the change that many are predicting. A change they believe has been bearing down on the planet for 5,000 years, the colossal transformation of our solar system and our collective psyche that many believe will happen on December 21, 2012.

Many believe that ancient prophecies indicate that change is coming. Big change. Predictions vary widely about what will happen. They range from total, all-out apocalypse to some kind of quantum shift in human awareness and consciousness. Yet they all agree that big change is coming for planet earth and the human race. And they appear to all focus on one specific day—December 21, 2012—the final day on the Mayan long count calendar. Never before have so many people from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints pinpointed one day as the expiration date for human civilization. It's like Y2K gone wild—Y2K on steroids!

In the last few years, 2012 has been showing up everywhere. There are thousands of websites devoted to 2012. On several websites there's an official 2012 countdown that will give you an up-to-the-second indicator of how long we have to wait for the end of the world. There's even an iPhone app that counts down the seconds to 12/21/12. It looks like for many people the countdown has officially begun! Books on 2012 are flying off the shelves. Network news, cable channels and major internet outlets are all featuring programs and articles on the 2012 phenomenon. Roland Emmerich's blockbuster disaster movie *2012*, that released on November 13, 2009, was the most expensive movie ever made.

I was shocked to find that in 2008, 16 percent of Americans answered "yes" when asked, "Do you expect any apocalyptic events to happen on December 21, 2012?" Another barometer of the swelling interest in 2012 is the "Ask an Astrobiologist" section of NASA's Web site where senior scientist David Morrison answers questions from the public. According to CNN, more than half of the inquiries on the most popular list were related to 2012. People everywhere are asking questions about 2012, and I believe this creates a unique opportunity for believers to seize upon this interest and bend the curve of all this to God's purposes. We can and should use 2012 as an opening with our friends and neighbors to debunk these false ideas and point people to the one true guidebook to the future and ultimately to faith in Jesus Christ. To equip us do that more effectively, let me answer a few key questions about 2012 and the end of the world.

## Why is 2012 Gaining So Much Attention?

Of course, people have set all kinds of dates for the end of the world in the past, so why is this date gaining such traction in popular culture? There are two main reasons that I can discern. First, crises of alarming complexity are emerging and accelerating with frightening regularity—depletion of vital resources, peak in oil production, food shortages, nuclear threat, economic meltdown, vanishing species, potentially pandemic flu viruses, wars and rumors of wars, turmoil in the Middle East, record tsunamis, erratic weather patterns, unprecedented earthquakes and the escalation of battering storms. Life on planet earth in the last few years has been anything but business as usual. We live in a fragile, increasingly dangerous, interdependent world. There's an amazing confluence of tipping points. And the world's problems are multiplying. Many people sense that our world may be getting near closing time and 2012 looks like as good a date as any for the grand finale. Second, there will be an astronomical alignment on December 21, 2012. Proponents of the 2012 doomsday have an actual event they can point to on 12/21/12 to bolster their theory.

### **Why 12/21/12?**

While 2012 enthusiasts point to Nostradamus' *Lost Book*, Bible codes, the WebBot computer project, the Hopi and Cherokee Indians, the *I Ching* (Chinese Book of Changes) and Mother Shipton to support their theory, it all ultimately goes back to the Mayans. The Mayans were obsessed with time and the alignment of the heavens. They had twenty different calendars, but the most important was their long count calendar which ends abruptly on 12.21.12, the same day that the earth and the sun align with the center of the galaxy—an alignment that only occurs every 26,000 years. December 21, 2012 also marks the end of the fifth cycle of 5,125 years on the long count calendar. Allegedly each of the previous four cycles ended in some great disaster, although no convincing evidence is every put forth to substantiate this claim.

### **What's Supposed to Happen on 12/21/12?**

So, what are people expecting to happen? Many are expecting the earth's poles to shift, a close call or even a collision with the tenth planet in our solar system (Planet X), solar Armageddon as the sunspot cycle goes wild, world-ending tsunamis, eruption of super volcanoes, and possibly even the beginning of a new age of global consciousness and transformation that will usher in a new age of humanity. And all this, simply because the earth and sun will be in galactic alignment with the equator of the Milky Way galaxy.

The only one of these theories that has any merit is solar flare eruptions. I haven't found one credible scientist who gives any weight to any of the other ideas. However, according to NASA, 2012 will be a very active year for solar flares. This could cause significant disruption of the electrical grids around the globe. No scientist is saying that it will be an extinction event, but it could cause serious problems.

### **Why Should We Reject the 2012 Theory?**

Sadly, some professing Christians, and even one well-known prophecy teacher, appear to be buying into the 2012 phenomenon. But there are many reasons for Christians to reject the 2012 doomsday theory. Let me highlight six specific ones. First, and most importantly, Jesus clearly stated that no one knows the time of His coming or the end of the world (Matthew 24:36,

42; Acts 1:7). Those who claim to know the time of the end are claiming to know something that Jesus said they cannot know. Over the year I've come to the conclusion that when anyone sets a date for the coming of Christ, you can be sure that won't be the day.

Second, the paganism of the Mayans and Nostradamus stands in direct contradiction to God's Word. We often hear 2012 adherents say that there are too many ancient sources pointing to 2012 for it to be an accident. They say that the Mayans, Nostradamus, Mother Shipton, the I Ching, the Hopis, Cherokees, etc. all predicted a final end-date in 2012. First, let me say that I have examined all of these alleged sources and the only one that clearly points to 2012 is the Mayan calendar. But even if they all did point to 2012, this indicates that they come from the same source and that source is certainly not God. The Mayans were bloodthirsty, barbaric, demonically-energized pagans. Nostradamus used an occultic method known as "scrying" to come up with his alleged prognostications. Why would the holy God of heaven ever reveal anything, much less the time of the end, to people who violated His Word and trafficked in demonic practices?

Third, the Mayans never say that 12/21/12 is the end of the world. Modern Mayan elders reject the entire doomsday theory and claim that it's a misreading of the data. One Mayan elder said recently that he is "fed up with this stuff."

Fourth, the entire background of the 2012 phenomenon is new age. Most of the books on 2012 come from a decidedly new age viewpoint. The 2012 theory has been called the eschatology of the new age movement. They have their own rapture. The founder of the modern 2012 movement, Jose Arguelles says that someday those who aren't spiritually enlightened enough will be carried away (raptured) from earth in silver ships. They are expecting a time of great global cataclysm and a future age of universal utopia. All of these ideas have been counterfeited by Satan from the biblical blueprint of the end times. The new age movement exalts man and views getting in touch with one's higher self as the goal of life. Colossians 2:8 speaks to this error: "Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ" (NLT).

Fifth, 2012 cannot be the time of the Second Coming of Christ, because for that to be true the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel would have to have begun in 2005 and the rapture would have to have preceded its beginning. Since neither of those events has occurred, 2012 cannot be the time of the Second Coming. Of course, the rapture could occur in 2012. It's an event that could occur at any moment. It could happen in 2010, 2011, 2012, or any year after that. But if Christ were to come for His bride in 2012 just think of the stir it would incite. Many could use the disappearance of millions of people as further support for their 2012 viewpoint.

Sixth, I believe that the end of the world as we know it won't occur until the end of the millennial reign of Christ (Revelation 21:1). Since the millennium follows the seven-year tribulation, we know from Scripture that the world can't "end" for at least another 1,007 years.

## **Conclusion**

While there are many issues surrounding 12.21.12 that I address in detail in my new book *2012, the Bible and the End of the World*, the bottom line is this—while the Mayans knew a great deal about astronomy and calendars, they did not know the future. No man does. Only God knows the future, and He has not revealed any specific dates for either the Second Coming of Jesus or the end of the world. Of course, some unusual things could happen on or near

December 21, 2012, but whatever occurs it won't be the end of the world, the mass extinction of humanity or some quantum leap to a new level of human consciousness. They don't know when the world will end. Only God knows, and He isn't telling anyone on earth.

May the Lord strengthen us and arm us with the truth so that we can be more faithful ambassadors of our Lord Jesus Christ.