



DISASTER ON THE HORIZON?

the state of Wisconsin becomes the South Pole. This upheaval causes massive earthquakes that strike throughout the world, resulting in entire continents breaking apart and becoming inundated by overwhelming oceanic turbulence. The horror depicted is tempered with humor and pathos, as well as philosophical debate as to how best to provide for the survival of the human species. In the process God is invoked (vaguely) by a few, but pragmatism and humanism comprise the prevailing attitude.

The fate of the world rests in the hands of the Chinese who have built six huge arks high in the Tibetan Himalayas. As one protagonist says, “Leave it to the Chinese.”

As the world crumbles we see well-recognized landmarks destroyed by earthquakes that surpass magnitude 10. The black president of the United States (not Obama) chooses to go down with the ship of state rather than save himself. Among the world’s heads of state only he and the president of the Italian Republic refuse to enter into the race toward the arks. When someone asks the whereabouts of the Italian president, he is told, “He chose to stay and trust in God.”

Immediately we are transported to Rome, Italy, where thousands are in prayer, and the most-recognized icon of Christendom, the Basilica of St. Peter, crumbles into the great plaza, destroying them. The message? So much for trusting in God.

The utter helplessness of God to intervene does not prevent the dialogue from being peppered with expletives such as “Christ!” and, in one obviously gratuitous moment, “Jesus Christ!”

But the spirit of man, as always in Hollywood filmdom, does prevail in spite of the harrowing, split-second escapes from disaster after disaster the main characters must endure. The improbable maneuvers they make in the midst of horrendous disaster eventually becomes yawn-inducing rather than causing the intended white-knuckle gripping of theater seats arms.

The movie is a lot of eyewash with spectacular special effects, but the plot line concerning the main characters is ho hum. What really makes this movie noteworthy is not the production itself, but the underlying message that the date of December 21, 2012, has some genuine significance for the human race.

The blockbuster motion picture *2012* is targeted to reach some 150 million people with the news that, during the winter solstice of 2012, the earth is about to experience a cataclysmic end to the current world order. The movie is based on the idea that the Long Count calendar of the ancient Mayans of South America ends on December 21, 2012, thus bringing to completion the 26,000-year precession of the equinoxes cycle for the earth. Because the Mayan Long Count calendar ends on that date much speculation has arisen as to how that may affect the earth and its inhabitants—particularly mankind.

The great upheaval portrayed in *2012* through fantastic special effects shows an unusual planetary alignment and other cosmic influences that cause the earth’s crust to disintegrate.

It is said that the Mayans believed that every 5,125 years the Sun, or Kinich-Ahau, synchronizes with the central galaxy around which it revolves, and receives from the galaxy energy that causes the Sun to produce huge solar flares. It would also cause the Sun’s magnetic field to change, as related in *2012*. This also causes a displacement in the earth’s rotation, and because of this movement great catastrophes would be produced. In *2012* the magnetic poles undergo radical change so that what was once



What's with 2012?

Let's put aside the Hollywood banter about what some are calling the beginning of the end, or, conversely, the end of the beginning. What does December 21, 2012 really portend? Can we trust in the interpretations of the Mayan Long Count calendar? In fact, does the calendar really contain any prophecy regarding that date? And what about other supposed prophecies about 2012? We are told that Nostradamus also prophesied about the end of the world in 2012. So, too, it is said, have other ancient religions. For that matter, many Christians are expecting the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and are melding that expectation with the alleged prophecies of these other sources.

The Mayan Prophecy

Does the Mayan Long Count Calendar really prophesy the end of the world? Or does it even prophesy anything at all?

At one time the Mayans utilized several calendars that were based on different astronomical and earth cycles. These calendars contained astrological calculations based on the idea that history repeats itself. The Long Count Calendar, known as the 13 B'ahktun (or Baktun) Cycle, or Great Cycle, contained 13 katuns (256-year cycles) that had specific "fates" attached to them.

The Long Count is 5,125 years, or 1/5 of the 26,000-year cycle of the precession of the equinoxes. This period was further divided into 13ths, 20ths, and 260ths. The 13th parts (394 years) were called baktuns. The 256-year cycle of thirteen katuns, the "short count," was a Mayan prophecy cycle. December 21, 2012 is the completion of the current 5,125-year cycle in the ancient Mayan Long Count Calendar. December 22, 2012 will begin the cycle all over again.

What has given rise to speculation about "the end of the world" is the "fate" attached to katun 13-ahua, which, according to a number of archaeological (and astrological) sources states:

This is a time of total collapse where everything is lost. It is the time of the judgment of God. There will be epidemics and plagues and then famine. Governments will be lost to foreigners and wise men, and prophets will be lost.

Another allegedly prophetic Mayan inscription relating to the end of the current 12 B'ahktun Cycle is the Tortuguero Monument #6, which was erected around A.D. 670 in Tabasco, Mexico. Archeologists were able to decode this monument's inscription to discover the end of the 13 B'ahktun Cycle to be December 21, 2012. The Tortuguero Monument #6 has been largely fragmented from unknown destructive forces over time and is therefore largely undecipherable. Several archaeologists agree that it concerns the Mayan god Bolon yokte K'uh who, it is said, will at that time descend. According to David Stuart, Mayanist scholar and Professor of Mesoamerican Art and Writing at the University of Texas at Austin, the complete (although fragmented) translation states: "The Thirteenth Bak'tun" will be finished (on) Four Ahaw, the Third of K'ank'in. (?) will occur. (It will be) the descent (?) of the Nine Support (?) God(s) to the (?)."¹

This cryptic and fragmented monument, then, is the basis for a "prophecy" that is at best obscure and unrelated to spiritual or physical reality. It applies to a false god worshipped by a lost civilization that practiced human (including child) sacrifice and died out mysteriously over one thousand years ago.

From where, and to where, this god will descend is unknown. Some are trying to tie this "prophecy" to the Second Coming of Christ. It is of particular interest to the Mormon Church because one of Mormonism's basic tenets is that Jesus came to the New World after His resurrection and proclaimed the Gospel to the inhabitants. The Book of Mormon is allegedly a chronicle of the ancient Mesoamericans including the Aztecs, Mayas, and Incas (although no archaeological evidence has ever been unearthed to support the book's "historical" accounts). The Mesoamerican snake god Quetzalcoatl is said by the Mormons to be Jesus Christ. The Mayas called him Kukulcan or Ququmatz. All these names translate to "Feathered Serpent."

The only person the serpent represents in Scripture is Satan.

Hopi Prophecy

We are told by proponents of a coming 2012 catastrophe that the Hopi Indians of the Southwest United States also have a prophecy of coming doom, and they imply that it could be connected to the same date as the Mayan calendar. The prophecy is said to have been given in 1958 by White Feather, a Hopi of the ancient Bear Clan. According to the story a minister named David Young was driving along a desert highway in the summer of 1958, and stopped to offer a ride to an Indian elder. After riding in silence for awhile, the Indian gave a "prophecy" that he claims foretold of the white man's coming, and the technological advances that he brought with him. Of course, all this is to the detriment of his people.

I won't go into details, but in analyzing these Hopi "prophecies" it is clear that they were given by this Indian elder after the fact. There are no recorded or oral traditions from the American Indians that are undeniably prophetic. It's easy to say they were spoken ages ago, but who can prove it?

1 Stephen Houston and David Stuart, "Of gods, glyphs and kings: divinity and rulership among the Classic Maya," *Antiquity* (Cambridge, England: Antiquity Publications, June, 1996), p. 301, cited in Wikipedia, sv, Tortuguero (Maya site).



A few other considerations: 1) these prophecies are considerably lucid in view of their having been given orally one time to David Young (most people cannot accurately recall a few sentences spoken to them; ever play the game, “Telephone”?); 2) there are so-called “doomsday” prophecies that have been circulating in every culture since the beginning of time; 3) there is no connection to the year 2012 in this prophecy.

That’s not to say demonic spirits could not have given some “prophecies” to those who worship devils. But without the Spirit of God, given only to those who have faith in Jesus Christ as the only way to the Father, there can be no true spiritual insight from God:

For what man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man that is in him? Even so, no man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God.

Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is of God, so that we may know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things we also speak, not in the words that man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:11-16)

Prophecy of the Popes

Another “prophecy” lately aligned with 2012 is that attributed to the 12th-century Roman Catholic “saint,” Malachy, consisting of 112 short phrases in Latin which are said to apply to the last 112 popes, including a few “anti-popes” (those who claim the title in opposition to a sitting pope), beginning with Celestine II, elected in 1143. The Latin phrases ostensibly relate to the personal history, characteristics, or events in the popes’ lives. As an example, the Latin motto for Pope John Paul II was *De labore solis*, a common Latin phrase for “solar eclipse.”

Karol Jozef Wojtyla, who became Pope John Paul II, was born May 18, 1920, when a partial solar eclipse occurred over the Indian Ocean. He was buried on April 8, 2005, the day of a rare hybrid eclipse over South America and the south-western Pacific.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* claims that the Prophecies of the Popes is a forgery. Some attribute it to Nostradamus who used Malachy’s name to avoid the wrath of the papacy.

Some of the prophetic titles are pretty accurate in relation to the popes to whom they are attributed, while others miss the mark or must be strained into fitting the attributes of particular popes. The most controversial aspect of the Prophecy of the Popes is that which states that the final pope (number 268) will be named Peter the Roman, and will be elected in the last days. He will be an anti-Christ who brings about the destruction of Rome.

The current pope, Benedict XVI, is number 267 according to the prophecy. However, this number is off by two according to the official Vatican registry of popes which has him at number 265. The discrepancy may be due to the inclusion in Malachy’s prophecy of two anti-popes.

But again, there is nothing in this prophecy to link it with the year 2012. I suppose we will have to wait to see if Benedict XVI survives for three more years. And if not, what the name of the next pope may be.

Nostradamus

One of the most popular and prolific alleged seers in human history is Nostradamus, born Michel de Nostredame in December, 1503. His most famous book, *Les Propheties (The Prophecies)* was first published in 1555. He has been credited with predicting many major world events, and his predictions are now being linked to the 2012 phenomenon, largely because most of them deal with “doomsday” scenarios.

Nostradamus wrote in a cryptic poetic style called quatrain. For that reason his predictions can more often than not be regarded as open-ended—too clouded to prevent any accurate application to real events in history, yet sufficiently applicable to virtually any period of major disaster that takes place on earth. This lends his writings to the speculative nature of today’s doomsayers wishing to bolster the idea that 2012 portends a great cataclysmic event that will spell the end of life on earth (at least as we know it).

There are several other sources of doomsday predictions that the 2012 exploiters are using to either instill fear or reap profit (or both) on the chance that something of significance in the way of disaster will occur on or shortly after December 21, 2012.

On the other hand there are the New Agers who are counting on that date to usher in a new consciousness that will result in a quantum leap forward in human spirituality.

A New Age?

Understandably, the controversy swirling around the alleged prophecies regarding the Mayan Long Count calendar is of particular interest to New Age philosophers and pundits. Although some seem to take a nonchalant attitude toward the whole thing, there seems to be a consensus that what happens on December 21, 2012, whether destructive or constructive, depends upon mankind’s evolutionary path. If mankind becomes sufficiently “enlightened” according to the cosmic forces that allegedly determine our fate, then that date might well be the time the earth enters into a period of peace and prosperity—a New Age of enlightenment where mankind becomes one with all nature. But if mankind persists in his destructive tendencies then we may bring down upon ourselves the wrath of Mother Earth—Gaia—whose consciousness will cause her to repel us for our sins against her. (New Agers believe the earth is a living organism.)

To the New Ager all the cosmos is a single holistic entity held together by an invisible force that eschews destruction and embraces peace, love and harmony. This, it is said, will be the true "Age of Aquarius." Exactly when the Age of Aquarius starts (or started) has been in dispute among astrologers. Some believe we are already in the Age of Aquarius, while others see it as a coming New Age. Still others believe we are in the transitory period between the two ages which will last for a few hundred years. According to accepted astrological cycles, each astrological age is approximately 2,150 years long, on average.

New Agers look forward to the Age of Aquarius as a time of transition for human consciousness. According to "Lord Maitreya," ostensibly channeled through his "prophet" Benjamin Crème, "The Aquarian energies started to enter our solar system in 1675, but one could say the Aquarian Age will start with Maitreya's Declaration of His identity and true status on the Day of Declaration which I personally hope and expect to be well before 2013, which date I expect is arrived at from the Mayan Calendar which ends in 2012."²

Prominent New Ager Deepak Chopra states, "What is most interesting to me in all this is not what may or may not happen in the external world, but rather the changes within our consciousness that are available to us right now. It is the radical choices for transformation we can make in our life now, individually and collectively, that will be the ultimate determinants as to what kind of future we will experience. If we choose to claim our authentic core of identity as agents of kindness, love, and understanding, then you won't need look at 2012 with worry or anticipation—you can create your own splendid transformation right here and now."³

One New Age Web site best sums up the New Age attitude:

So we come back to what they call 'The Time of No Time'. It is an evolutionary period, short but intense, inside the grand cycles where great changes take place to thrust us into a new age of evolution as individuals and as mankind.

As individuals we will have to make decisions that will affect us all. If we continue on this negative path of hate, an eye for an eye, destruction of nature, of fear and egoism, we will enter straight into the time of destruction and chaos, and we will disappear as the dominant race of this planet. If we become conscious and realize that we all form part of a great organism, and that we should respect one another and be grateful to our planet, then we will move directly into positive growth, our Golden Age. Our planet, the Sun and the Galaxy are awaiting our decision. It is up to us what will happen in this time of change. Whether we go through a time of suffering and destruction or we find ourselves united in one positive consciousness moving closer to our next stage.⁴

A characteristic of New Age responses to just about everything reflects the false seers' positions: "It all depends."

Conclusion

The world places more faith in those whose predictions have proven so open-ended as to be of no value, or fail far more often than they come to pass. Yet it rejects God's Word whose prophecies have been proven to be 100 percent reliable over the span of thousands of years. The spiritual darkness that clouds men's minds is to be expected in the unregenerate. It isn't surprising that they follow the courses of stars and planets for guiding their lives, and pay no mind to the living God.

But it seems that many Christians are also influenced by non-biblical and even unbiblical words of "prophecy," "wisdom," and instruction. The Christian media are crammed with charlatans posing as prophets for profit. But some Christians also look to obviously non-biblical sources—even astrology—for guidance. Some are genuinely concerned that something terrible and dramatic is going to happen on December 21, 2012.

God's Word to His faithful is this:

He who dwells in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of YHWH, He is my refuge and my fortress—my God. I will trust in Him.

Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall trust; his truth shall be your shield and protector.

You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday.

A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come near you. (Psalms 91:1-7)

Believers in Jesus look for the day when He will return, and we know it will be a terrible day for the unbelieving and unrighteous. But we also know that it will come as a thief in the night, and that no one knows the day or the hour, but the Father alone (Matthew 24:36).

We are also told not to listen to the false prophets who lead people astray from the true God:

But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. (Deuteronomy 18:20)

We do not put to death false prophets today. The Lord has commanded us to love even His enemies and to minister truth to them for the sake of their salvation. But God's Word is very strong against prophets who speak in the name of other gods.

There are no logical or scientific reasons to believe the "prophecies" related to 2012, or to act upon them. More importantly, God's Word does not give us reason to believe them. Scripture is our more sure Word of Prophecy (2 Peter 1:19). ❖

2 Maitreya, "Questions and Answers," Share International, http://www.share-international.org/magazine/old_issues/2007/feb_07.htm#qa

3 Deepak Chopra, "Ask Deepak," <http://deepakchopra.com/?p=834>

4 http://www.adishakti.org/mayan_end_times_prophecy_12-21-2012.htm