

Doomsday Theories and the End of the World

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Many people predicted that the world would end on December 21, 2012. Well, we are still here! But there was a lot of hype with new motion pictures, You Tube presentations, Internet talk, and even secular news programs talking about the year 2012 as a coming apocalyptic cataclysm or judgment that will bring the world to its close. For many years this date, among others, have been targeted as earth's expiration date.

According to the ancient Mayan people (American Indian people) a cataclysmic upheaval was supposed to occur on December 21, 2012. The cosmic clock was supposed to wind down to zero and a time of epic disaster would hit this world. This doomsday prophecy was allegedly encoded in the ancient Mayan Calendar and was supposed to occur as a result of the alignment of the sun and moon with the Milky Way Galaxy.

Many argued that various disastrous scenarios would occur which ranged from volcanic eruptions caused by solar storms, massive earthquakes, cracks in the earth's magnetic field, and mass extinction brought on by some type of nuclear winter.

Another 2012 doomsday theory was that Planet X. It taught that the earth was on a collision course with the ninth planet of our solar system, known as Planet X. The official name of the planet is 2003UB313. Some believed that ancient Sumerian astronomers identified the planet 5,000 years ago and named it Nibiru. Of course, all of this was proven to be a complete hoax.

Nostradamus, the king of secular doomsday seers, also predicted the world would end in about 2012. An alleged lost book of Nostradamus has been found and interpreters of the book claim he also predicted a cataclysmic

end to the world in 2012, along with many other vague predictions, such as the Kennedy assassination and 911.

God's people should not follow end-of-the-world doomsday prophecies.

There are two reasons why we should reject end of the world prophecies.

I. The doomsday myths are false.

Of course, Biblically-minded and discerning people (Heb. 5:14) know that all of these spurious, prophetic predictions of the end of the world have been proven false because they do not align with true Bible prophecy.

2 Timothy 4:2-4 reminds us to not follow these types of fables:

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

The word for “fables” is myths and suggests there will be many myths that will seek to replace the clear preaching and teaching of God's Word during the last days. People will follow legends instead of truth. They will adhere to hype instead of God's Holy Word.

2012 was not the first time people have wrongly concluded that the world was going to end. Many over the years have made wrong predictions regarding the end of the earth. I want you to consider how many people have set dates for the end of the world which have not come true.

- Ancient Assyrian clay tablets foretold that the world would end in 2,800 BC.
- The Montanists during the second century (155 AD) were an end-of-the-world-cult and claimed the world would end during their lifetime.
- The Lotharingian (the millennial cults) believed they found evidence in the Bible that the world will end during their time, March 25, 970.

- Pope Innocent III predicted Christ's coming would occur in the year of 1284.
- Botticelli predicted the early 1500's as apocalyptic and the year of the Second Coming would be 1504.
- On February 1, 1524, some London astrologer predicted that a great flood would sweep over the earth.
- In 1684, after a close study of the Kabbalah, A Turkish rabbi (Sabbatai Zevi) predicted that the Messiah would make a miraculous return in 1684.
- In 1666 was supposedly the number of the Beast and the end of the world as such with the heralding of the fires of London.
- In 1792 the Shakers predicted the end of the world.
- Jehovah's Witnesses have set documented dates for the prophetic end of the world as we now know it – 1914, 1915, 1918, 1920, 1925, 1941, 1975, and 1994.
- In 1844 preacher William Miller predicted that Jesus would return to upstate New York on October 22, 1844 and the world would end as we know it today.
- 1988 was supposed to be the last year of the earth. Edgar Whisenant wrote a book, "88 Reasons Why Christ Will Return in 1988." The book did not sell so well in 1989.
- In 1994 Harold Camping predicted that the Lord would return in September in a book called "Are You Ready?" More recently Harold Camping said that October 21, 2011 would be the date for the end of the world.

There is miserable record of failure with those who predicted the end of the world with the Second Coming of Christ or some doomsday prophecy.

- Added to these misdirected conclusions are the millennial prophets which claim that the earth is going to end since it is 6,000 years old from the time of creation. And since God works in cycles of sevens (like He did in the creation account) the world must end soon on what they call a Millennial Sabbath rest. In fact, many of the church fathers believed that the earth would only last 6,000 years and end in their time.

Let's stop all of the hype and hypothesis regarding the end of the earth. The doomsday myths are false. The Bible tells us when the earth will end. This brings us to our next point.

II. The Biblical conclusions are true.

The Bible is true and overrides the doomsday theories which have already been discredited and others that will arise and be circulated in the future. Jesus said, "thy word is truth" (John 17:17) and we are called upon to keep "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). The Bible and what it teaches about the end of the world replaces all the myths that are linked with the end of earth's existence.

a. God's timetable is not our timetable!

2 Peter 3:8

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

As mentioned above, some have conjectured that Peter is likening earth's history to the creation account and remind us that the six days were followed by a seventh day rest – a cessation of God's creation. In a similar way, they concoct the scenario that there will be a cessation of the earth's existence after 6,000 years of history. By the seventh cycle of one thousand years the earth will have run its course and be destroyed. After all they say, God works in a series of sevens.

According to Bible chronology, the earth is young, but we cannot be exact on a 6,000-year earth history (when it occurs) nor can we be sure that God is necessarily going to destroy the earth when it enters its alleged 7,000-year cycle. God sometimes works in sevens based upon a study of the Book of Revelation but God has already informed us what these sevens

are when reading about them in Bible prophecy. We should not conjecture about other “cycles of sevens” and create our own manmade theories about the end of the earth.

Let God be God! Let’s stop all of the doomsday hype. God is much bigger than all of this and God views time differently than we do. Man with his theories do not hold water. They are just that – conjecture.

Here is the key. What Peter is saying is that God views time differently than we do since He is the eternal God. His schedule does not align with man’s calculations and theories. God has His own time schedule that man cannot figure out with his computers, manmade theories, and mythical calculations. In His time (not man’s time) the earth will be destroyed and a new one created. But it will be according to God’s schedule.

Some people also link Christ’s Second Coming with the end of the world. Little do they realize that the world will not end with Christ’s Second Coming. Actually, the Millennium or 1,000-year rule of Christ on earth will occur after His Second Coming (Rev. 19-20). In fact, those who claim the earth will end with Christ’s Second Coming cannot even calculate the timing of His Coming based upon manmade criteria, assumptions, and bad exegesis of Bible texts.

Jesus taught that no person will be able to know the exact time of Christ’s Second Coming.

Matthew 24:36

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”

People might conjecture when the Second Coming will occur but they can never know the timing of His coming. To make dates that surround the timing of Christ’s Second Coming is senseless. Everyone who has done this has made themselves look like a fool. It’s pure conjecture to claim that you can know the time when Christ will return and even more senseless to create doomsday theories surrounding His Second Coming.

b. God’s Word gives us the calculations to follow

Let me give you some Biblical calculations which are true prophetic calculations regarding the timing of end of the earth.

There must be at least 1,007 years before the world ends.

1. The Bible predicts that seven years of Tribulation will follow the Rapture of the Church.

We don't know how much more time will elapse before Christ returns for His Bride (the Church) but the countdown must be getting closer.

Jesus taught in John 14:1-3:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Jesus simply promised to His disciples “I will come again.” This particular coming of Christ has been termed by many as the Rapture (catching away of His Bride) since Jesus will take His people out of this world and relocate them in Heaven - in the Father's House. We are snatched from this earth and transplanted in the Father's House (Heaven). What a day it will be!

God's saints are not coming back to earth immediately. We are returning to the Father's House. This is my joy and hope. Heaven is our destiny! This is a new revelation not foretold by the prophets in the Old Testament. We are not coming back to the earth immediately, Jesus was going to first return and snatch away His Bride (N.T. Church) and take her back to Heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 gives this information:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up (raptured) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

How long will the Church be in the Father's House before we return to earth with Christ? The Bible predicts that we will live there for seven years before Christ's returns to earth. In Daniel 9:24-27 we have the prophecy of the 490

years. Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks when properly understood in a literal hermeneutic provides us with some important information about the End Times. It informs us that there will be a time of judgment upon the earth that will last for seven years. This key passage in God's prophetic Word informs us that the world is not going to end any time soon. Daniel 9:24-27 has been called the "God's prophetic Time Clock."

The word "weeks" (Dan. 9:24) translates the Hebrew word "shabua" and literally means "sevens" and the context of Daniel tells us that Daniel is speaking about "sevens" in relationship to years (units of years) - not days (Dan. 9:1-2). It would be most natural for Daniel to understand these "sevens" as referring to units of years since this is what Daniel was thinking in regards to the captivity of His people.

Daniel 9:27 goes on to say:

"And he (the Antichrist) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: (one period of seven years) and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

The Bible predicts that there will be "one week" or one seven (a final seven or period of seven years) that still remains on God's prophetic time clock. This will occur when the Antichrist makes a peace covenant with Israel during the future. Since no seven-year historical covenant has ever been made to the nation of Israel this seven-year covenant must still be in the future.

The Book of Revelation depicts this seven-year time period as unleashing catastrophic judgments upon planet earth after the Church has been raptured or taken back to the Father's House. These judgments are explained as seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments (Rev. 6-18). Jesus foretold this time period as consisting of intense judgments likening it to the birth pangs of a woman (Matt. 24).

What this means is that at least seven years must elapse before the ending of the world. Jesus must first return for His Church and then another seven years must tick off on God's prophet clock and calendar.

2. The Bible predicts that one thousand years will follow the seven years of Tribulation.

After the seven-years of judgment upon planet earth expires, then Messiah (Jesus Christ) will return to planet earth, not to destroy it, but to rule and reign over the earth for one thousand years.

Revelation 20:1-6

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

Although many have attempted to allegorize or spiritualize the Millennium the Bible clearly teaches it. The number in the Book of Revelation would be senseless and the Book would be senseless if the numbers were not taken literally.

In Revelation 19, after the seven years of Tribulation (Rev. 6-18), we have a graphic picture of Christ's Second Coming. Is the Second Coming of Christ literal? Yes. If this is literally true, then what happens immediately after the Second Coming is also literally and true in chapter 20. Jesus Christ will establish a Millennium over the earth for 1,000 years. If the event of chapter 19 is literal, then the event of chapter 20 which logically follows chapter 19 is also literal.

So now we have seven years (the Tribulation Period) followed by one thousand years (the Millennium). This means the earth is not going to end

anytime soon. There must be at least 1007 years before the earth can end. This means that those who are reading this won't be alive to see the ending of the earth.

Once again, all of the spurious prophetic predictions regarding the end of the world are false and have nothing to do with true Bible prophecy or the timing of the end of the world. True prophecy is found in God's Word - not in man's phony predictions and modern, prophetic proclamations which are being made today.

2 Peter 1:19 says:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

A. We can be sure of God's prophecies.

The entire Bible is in one sense a prophetic word, since it was supernaturally revealed to prophets (vs. 21), and since these same prophets gave it to us through the process of revelation. The prophetic Word that is given to us in the Bible is said to be a "more sure word of prophecy." This indicates that God's prophetic Word which also contains a great portion of prophetic truth about the future is stable, trustworthy, and dependable. Peter says it's more dependable than his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration. The prophetic Word of Scripture can be trusted and is one hundred percent accurate and reliable. The words of the would-be prophets of today, who are parading their prophecies before the world, cannot be trusted, when placed beside the straight and unchanging standard of truth. The only prophetic truth we have today is found in the Bible and the Bible reveals to us that the world will not end anytime soon.

B. We can study God's prophecies.

The words "take heed" mean we should pay attention to God's prophetic Word and study it, which has been revealed by the prophets of old, so we can learn Bible truth and allow it to change our lives. Also, as we study the Scriptures we will specifically learn about the coming events of Bible prophecy. We must study and turn our attention and thinking to what is predicted to happen in the future. As we do we will receive a blessing (Rev. 1:3) and be more discerning about the trends and developments that are

taking place in our world today, which are leading up to the period of known as the “end times,” not the end of the world, but a time of judgment that will come upon planet earth someday (the seven-year Tribulation Period).

1. The purpose for studying prophecy

The purpose or reason why we should study God’s Word is because it’s “a light that shineth in a dark place.” My friend, we need light today in a world that is lost in the darkness of sin and unbelief. Relativism has replaced absolutes but God’s truth is like a shining or burning lamp in a dark world of sin, unbelief, and confusion. If you want light about the future, then look into God’s Word – not at the predictions of Nostradamus, the end of the world doomsday prophecies, and other spurious predictions about the future.

2. The period of time for studying prophecy.

We are called upon to heed or study God’s truth until the dawning of a new day (“until the day dawn”). In short, we are to keep studying it, believing it, and living in light of it, until the dawning of the new day. This new dawning day is a way to describe the end of this present Church Age with Christ’s return for the Church in the Rapture.

“Oh this could be the dawning of that grand and glorious day
When the face of Jesus we behold
Dreams and hopes of all the ages
Are waiting His returning
And this could be the dawning of that day.”

Romans 13:12

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.”

The rising of the morning star pictures Christ’s coming for His saints (Rev. 22:16). The sense of the passage is that we should always keep the prophetic word before us, treasuring it in our hearts, for it will serve as a true light in the midst of this dark world, until the age is ended and Christ appears in the Rapture, to take His waiting people home to Heaven (1 Thess. 1:10).

God's prophetic Word can be trusted while the whimsical words and conclusions of man cannot be trusted. This once again brings up the question: Is the world really going to end in the near future? Can a date be set for the end of the world?

The Bible teaches that the world cannot end until after the Second Coming, the seven-year Tribulation, and the Millennium (1,000-year rule of Christ). Again, there must be at least 1,0007 years before planet earth can end. This leads to another question. How will the world end? The Bible teaches that God will bring the earth to its end with the direct hand of His judgment. It will be God who pushes the button to destroy the world – not some Middle Eastern madman or the galactic alignment of the planets.

Revelation 21:1 declares:

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”

The ending of this present world occurs after the Millennial Kingdom (1,000 years), according to Revelation 20:7 (“and when the thousand years are expired”). Or course, the purpose for ending this earth is to create a new one that is unaffected by sin, ecological disaster, and an earth where eternal righteousness will abound in every society.

You will notice a very clear sequence in these prophetic chapters. In Revelation chapter 19 Christ returns in His Second Coming. In chapter 20 we have the one-thousand-year Millennium, and in chapter 21, following a rebellion, we have the new earth created since the first one has passed out of existence. This is God's clear revelation. If we accept it for what it teaches we will not be lead astray by doomsday prophets. Yes, the world is going to end but it cannot end until God destroys it and this will happen according to God's prophetic timetable as outlined in His Word.

2 Peter 3:10-12 envisions the ending of the earth:

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God (the eternal

state), wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?”

a. The prophetic end

In 2 Peter 3:10 Peter describes the ending of the earth (following the Millennium) in the words of a great climactic end-time nuclear explosion which implodes planet and earth so God can create a new earth. Have you ever witnessed the implosion of a building? This in essence is what is going to happen when the world is destroyed. God will loosen the atomic structure and implode planet earth. It's going to happen! The God who created the earth can destroy it and make a new planet for the eternal state – one that is not longer marred by the effects of sin.

The language of Peter does not sound like a remodeling of the earth but a complete remaking of the earth! This is also what the Revelation 21:1 states: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.” Yes, the earth is going to be destroyed 1007 years after the Rapture of God's people. This Biblical teaching discredits and destroys all the doomsday prophecies and myths being propagated today. When we understand what the Bible teaches, we won't be led astray by every wind of false doctrine (Eph. 4:14).

b. The practical implication

In 2 Peter 3:10-12, the practical aspect of prophecy and specifically the ending of the world with the beginning of eternity (“the day of God” – vs. 12) should motivate us to live for God today (“what manner of persons ought ye to be” – vs. 11). In other words, we should live in light of eternity, investing our lives in eternal things that will last. The day of God! Think of eternity! Pause and ponder this word – ETERNITY!

Billy Sunday said:

“When ten thousand times ten thousand times ten thousand years have passed, eternity will have just begun.”

In trying to explain eternity, someone gave this illustration. High up in the North, in the land called Svithjod, there stands a rock. It is 100 miles high and 100 miles wide. Once every 1000 years a little bird comes to this rock

to sharpen its break. When the rock has thus been worn away by the beak of the bird, only then a single day of eternity will have gone by!

If we are headed toward the eternal state, we had better live with eternity's values in view. We should serve the Lord and live for God and gain reward. We ought to be living a holy and godly life since everything else on earth will be blown up and be worthless in the end. We should live for eternal things (Matt. 6:19-20) instead of secular things since none of our worldly endeavors will remain in the eternal state (1 John 2:17). Only what we have done for Christ will last. Think of it. Eternity!

The files in the 'temp' folder of a computer are no longer good after they serve their purpose. Computer experts suggest that as long as the date of a file in the 'temp' folder is not today, it is safe to delete. Accumulating too many of such files in the 'temp' folder will take up too many disk space and will slow down the system. These files are only temporary.

In a similar way, there are too many things in our lives that can be classified as 'temp files.' They don't yield eternal value or dividends. Do you have too many of such 'temp files' in your life? They are not needed in eternity. They only give you extra burdens and slow you down in your spiritual walk with God. Dear friend, get rid of them and live for eternity!

In closing, we should not worry about the ending of the world during our lifetime. What we should be concerned about is the ending of our opportunities to live for Jesus Christ and gain eternal reward before our time on earth ends (2 Tim. 4:8).