

second time because they have chosen to hate the hard truth about their sinful condition and love comforting and unbiblical lies which tell them they will be saved in their sin. God declares, "Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? . . . I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord God. "Therefore turn and live!" (Ez. 18:23, 32) When the world ends and the wicked are destroyed, the Lord is simply giving them what they want. Proverbs 8:36 puts it this way. ". . . he who sins against Me (God) wrongs his own soul; all those who hate Me love death."

In order to be prepared for the end of the world and the return of Christ we must first understand our true condition. The Bible teaches that the root of all sin is selfishness. Most people think that they are good, but a sincere look into God's word reveals the opposite. Even our acts of kindness can be done through selfish motives. What we need is first; Christ's forgiveness and second; a new heart of selfless love. This pardon can only be received by asking Jesus for it in prayer.

A new heart and Spirit are given to us by seeking God in His word (1 Peter 1:23).

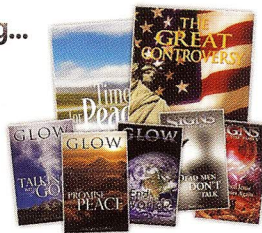
Christ longs for all to be with Him in His kingdom when He returns (2 Peter 3:9). In fact the Bible teaches that when He does come back our friends and loved ones who died in Jesus will be raised to eternal life! "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven . . . And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:16-18).

The Long Count calendar of the Maya—with its precise calculation of the positions of heavenly bodies over a span of more than 5000 years—is a remarkable human achievement. But the Bible tells us God set the planets and stars on their courses, and therefore He determines their movements—they do not determine His. If we are safe in Jesus, we need not worry about what will happen to us on December 21, 2012—or any other day.



Further Reading...

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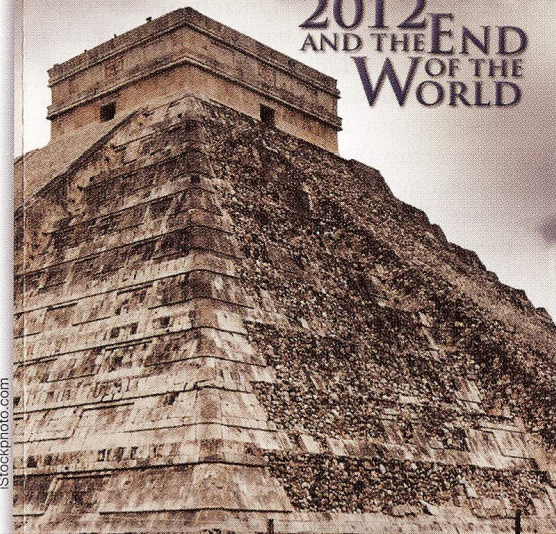
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2012 AND THE END OF THE WORLD



Giving Light to Our World

2012 and the End of the World

In 2012, the temperature of the Earth's core, bombarded by neutrinos from a massive solar flare, will increase dramatically. This will cause cataclysmic earthquakes worldwide, including the eruption of the massive Yellowstone caldera in Wyoming. These, in turn, initiate mega tsunamis which sweep across the continents. This world wide devastation was recently portrayed in the movie, 2012, but is any of it true? Will all of these things take place at the end of the Long Count calendar, on December 21, 2012?

The Bible's answer is No. In speaking about His return and the end of the world Jesus boldly told His listeners, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36). He couldn't have been clearer. The world will end and He will return on his own terms—and the terms of His calendar are known only to Him.

And yet we are not left guessing about the nearness of the end. Jesus declared that "[We] will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains." Natural and man-made disasters will escalate as Christ's return approaches but He will not come until the gospel of the kingdom is "preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14). Like a blaring fire alarm, daily headlines remind us of a world falling apart. And not a few people are talking about our imminent demise. But in His great mercy God tarries because He doesn't want to lose a single one of His children. Even now, the good news of salvation is racing around this planet, preparing people for His arrival.

But the question remains. If we don't know the exact timing of Christ's return then what is it we should know? This critical concern was

addressed by Jesus nearly 2,000 years ago. At His final farewell, soon after the resurrection, His awestruck disciples watched as He ascended into the clouds, disappearing from sight. But nearby were two heavenly messengers who delivered a precious promise to the forlorn followers. " 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven' " (Acts 1:11).

Notice that this promise is entirely consistent with Christ's earlier statements about His return. With great force He dispelled any notions of secrecy. He warned his disciples, "If anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There He is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. . . . So if anyone tells you, 'There He is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here He is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the

Son of Man" (Matt 24:23-27).

Far from being a covert operation, the Second Coming will be an inescapable event. "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God" (1 Thess. 4:16). "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him" (Rev. 1:7). All eyes will be riveted on this noisy climax—no need for Tweet's or CNN's breaking news. These details of Christ's return are important because 2 Thess. 2:9 shows that Satan himself, a dazzling being of light, will attempt to deceive the world through a false second coming. You can read more on this topic in a book called, "The Great Controversy" at www.glowonline.org.

But what does this mean for you? After all, what good are the facts if you're not ready for the occasion? To understand what it means to be ready you must first realize that the Second Coming can be good news! There is no need to fear the end of the world if you are on Christ's side. Revelation 6:14-17 describes how most people will run in fear and be destroyed when Christ returns a