

Review of Hitchcock, *2012, the Bible and the End of the World*

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Hitchcock M 2009. *2012, the Bible and the end of the world*.
Eugene: Harvest House Publishers.

1. Introduction to the Author and the Book

Mark Hitchcock, whose books have sold more than 300,000 copies, is the pastor of Faith Bible Church in Edmond, Oklahoma. He earned his law degree from Oklahoma State University, and a PhD from Dallas Theological Seminary. He is uniquely equipped to present the various 2012 end-time scenarios, in addition to the Bible's last-days prophecies. Moreover, many consider him to be the foremost expert on Bible prophecy today. He has written over a dozen books on the Bible and the end times, including *The complete book of bible prophecy*, *Cashless*, *Iran: the coming crisis*, *101 answers to the most asked questions about the end times*, *The coming Islamic invasion of Israel*, *Is America in Bible prophecy?*, and *What on earth is going on?*

The prediction that the world will end on the 21st December 2012 has spawned a growing number of fringe-element books, web sites, and even a major movie (p. 9). The author points out the explosion of information about the subject of 2012. He writes that 187 books appeared when he searched Amazon on the topic. He indicates that when he googled '2012', there were almost 60,000 hits. He writes that

new books are appearing on the internet and in bookstores almost every month.

Hitchcock, as a writer in the Bible prophecy genre, has tackled the hype surrounding the 2012 spectre. With his calming perspective based thoroughly on what the Bible teaches, he makes unmistakably clear and understandable the truth regarding the Mayan calendar prophecy. In 192 pages, he gets to the heart of the doomsday prediction presented by shamans who have been dead for centuries. In this masterful work, while other authors of voluminous tomes on the 2012 matters consider writing second, and even third volumes, Hitchcock points with precision in this tightly crafted book to where the reader should devote concentration about 2012.

Hitchcock writes (p. 24):

So, why another book? What could I possibly say that has not already been said? Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to point to the title of the book. As the title suggests, my focus is to examine the 2012 phenomenon from a biblical perspective, primarily from the vantage point of end-times Bible prophecy ... While many other 2012 books mention the Bible or Bible codes, they don't look at 2012 through the lens of Scripture; rather, they look at Scripture through the lens of 2012. They pick and choose selected verses from the Bible, especially from the Book of Revelation, to support their vision of what the future holds ... This book is written with one purpose in mind: to examine and expose the 2012 deadline in light of Bible prophecy and present what I believe the Bible reveals about the end of the age.

2. A Summary of the Book

Mark Hitchcock presents an extremely well researched book from a conservative biblical position. In *2012, the Bible and the end of the world*, this best-selling prophecy expert explores a fascinating last-days controversy that is gaining the attention of millions all over the globe. The question arises: what should Christians make of the rapidly spreading speculations that the world will end on the 21st of December 2012?

The book provides a fascinating survey of both the historical past and the prophetic future. Readers will discover how to counter effectively baseless speculation with biblical fact. Missing in today's furore about the prophecy is a biblical perspective. In his book, Bible teacher Hitchcock provides the above perspective as he examines the following questions:

- Why 21 December 2012?
- Can we trust the Mayan alarm clock?
- Does the Bible say anything about 2012?
- What signs will tell us that Armageddon is near?

Hitchcock first gives a thorough explanation of, and later, a good critique of the ideas behind the recent 2012 end-of-the-world scare in this educational read. This end-time scare is closely associated with the belief that the ancient Mayans were expert astronomers and their advanced calendar cycles predicted the 21st of December 2012 as a catastrophic day of apocalypse. A large group of people today would like you to believe that it is true; they are selling books and making movies to spread their message and, in the process, they are making a lot of money.

The whole hype has to do with 2012 marking the end of the Mayan calendar. Well, at least the end of the latest 5,125-year cycle of one of the Mayan calendars. There were actually twenty Mayan calendars. The end of this particular calendar, however, comes with the added bonus that it ends at roughly the same time as the once-in-every-26,000 year alignment when, according to the author, ‘the winter solstice for the Northern hemisphere, the sun and earth will line up with the galactic centre of the Milky Way’ (p. 34).

For those who did not major in astronomy, these calculations are not exactly self-evident or even very clear. Furthermore, a certain 2012 website states that the last time this alignment occurred was on the 27th of July 9,792 BC, allegedly, the day that Atlantis was destroyed. There is, of course, no consensus that there ever was an Atlantis, much less that it fell into the sea as a result of this alignment.

The Mayan prophecy paints a scary picture of the coming catastrophe. One senses the fear building, as the end of the world approaches. Because of powerful astral alignment dynamics, planet earth is most likely about to suffer instant pole reversals, thus, horrific tectonic plate shifts. This will cause the catastrophic end for most, perhaps all, human life. This is the fear of the proponents of ancient Mayan calendar’s predictions.

To understand the type of people who believe in this 2012 scare, one should take note that the first 2012 conference was held in Hollywood, and the second, in San Francisco. There seems to be a strong connection with the New Age group. The last scheduled conference is set for the 12th of December 2012 at the Mayan pyramids.

Hitchcock divides his book into twelve chapters. The theme of these chapters is as follows:

1. The end of the world as we know it
2. An ancient doomsday clock
3. Apocalypse now?
4. The last book of Nostradamus
5. Bible codes, the book of Revelation
6. Computers and 2012
7. Does anybody really know what time it is?
8. Can anyone know the future?
9. Future tense
10. In the end, God
11. Scanning the horizon
12. 2012 and you

3. Strengths of the Book

The two strongest parts of the book are the fairly detailed explanation of the history of Mayan calendars' history and what exactly it entails, and the fascinating details of numerous-yet-failed 'we know the date of the end of the world' predictions that have been made. The first end prediction mentioned dates back almost 5,000 years.

More modern predictions include Pope Innocent III predicting the end times in 1284, preacher William Miller focusing on the 22nd of October 1844 (later know in American Christian circles as the Great Disappointment), and the Jehovah's Witnesses zeroing in on, so far, nine different dates. However, nine different dates is not exactly zeroing in on anything, since all of these predictions failed to come true.

Hitchcock also explains various claims of secret messages encoded in the Bible leading to the 2012 date. According to one secret decoding, David Koresh was mentioned 2,729 times in the first five books of the

Bible. A word of advice is given to the wise: believing in encoded Bible messages is like believing someone who thinks that all of Nostradamus' predictions were quite clear. The final word to those predicting Christ's coming and/or the end of the world should be Matthew 24:44 (KJV): 'For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.'

Good features of the book also include the following: this book answers numerous questions about the 2012 end-time speculations; it is full of biblical wisdom; it informs why the Bible is God's Word, accurate, true, and trustworthy; it shows how current events are lining up to set the stage for God's end-time plan; it tells what one can do right now to face 2012 and one's future in these uncertain times; it gives peace and comfort by reminding us that God is in control and not man. In short: it is short, concise, and an easy read.

4. Weakness of the Book

A little more than halfway through the book, Hitchcock changes gears from explaining what 2012 is all about, and begins to explain what the Bible foretells, at least according to his view. Not all Christians will agree with his interpretations, and, at times, it appears that he seems as sure about his predictions as the 2012-ers are about theirs. Hitchcock's views are biblical, but far from unanimously agreed upon by Christian scholars.

Conclusion

2012, the Bible and the end of the world is an interesting, informative read, especially for those who know very little about the 2012 talk, which will undoubtedly grow stronger as the day of the 21st of

December 2012 draws closer. It is the book on the 2012 matter that I can recommend to best bring you understanding of what the future holds.

Mark Hitchcock, in dynamic fashion—yet with his trademark graceful use of reason tempered by a profound understanding of God's prophetic Word—shines the spotlight of truth on the ominous things of the 2012 prophecy. For those interested in the controversies surrounding the end of the Mayan calendar, this book is 'a must'. To get a quick, thorough, and easy-to-read, Bible-based understanding of what the growing 2012 hysteria is all about, this is the only book one needs.

Reference List

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