Apocalypse

In America, the biggest upsurge was led by self-taught preacher William Miller. The last of his several dates for the end became the “Great Disappointment” of October 22, 1844. A remnant persisted, though without date-setting, and became the Seventh Day Adventists. Miller’s Bible interpretation influenced many subsequent end-timers. *(The North Platte Telegraph, December 26, 1999)*

I think the world will come to an end amid general applause from all the wits, who believe that it is a joke. *(Soren Kierkegaard)*

**The word “Armageddon” is a Greek form of the Hebrew name “Har Megiddon.” It means “hill (or mountain) of Megiddo.” Megiddo is an ancient town of Palestine . . . a strategic military city of ancient times.**

***(Keith W. Stump, in Plain Truth magazine)***

**A book published earlier this year predicts that a prelude to the end of the world will begin this week, with millions of the faithful suddenly, silently called to heaven and global disasters following. The prospect increased attendance yesterday at some churches, the book has been a best-seller and some people have even quit their jobs in preparation for the end. *(Rocky Mountain News, September 12, 1988)***

**So what if I can't spell Armageddon? It's not the end of the world. *(Stewart Francis, in Reader's Digest)***

**The Doomsday Clock is ticking: The scientists who manage the world’s Doomsday Clock have moved its hands two minutes closer to midnight, says the Associated Press. Now set at five minutes to doomsday, the clock is a symbolic representation of the likelihood of an apocalypse that could wipe out much of the human race. The clock hadn’t moved since 2002, but the keepers of the clock said an update was warranted because of North Korea’s test of a nuclear weapon and Iran’s pursuit of one. They also cited global warming and the specter of world environmental collapse. First created by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists in 1947, the clock was closest to midnight in 1953, when a hydrogen bomb test by the U.S. prompted the panel to move it just two minutes from midnight. Renowned mathematician Stephen Hawking warns that nowadays, climate change is so serious, it needs to be a worldwide policy priority. Terrorism “only kills hundreds or thousands of people,” he argues. “Global warming could kill millions. We should have a war on global warming rather than the war on terror.” *(The Week magazine, February 2, 2007)***

**The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has moved the minute hand on its Doomsday Clock two minutes closer to catastrophe, to 11:57 p.m. -- the closest it's been to midnight since 1984. The scientists' group said its warning was based on humanity's failure to address climate change and reduce stockpiles of nuclear weapons. *(Scientific American, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 6, 2015)***

**The end of the world doesn’t much concern me. I live in Boston. *(Theodore Parker)***

As frenzied revelers flock to Pacific Islands or Times Square on New Year’s Eve, certain religious believers will be contemplating the end of the world. But experts on millenarian religion say they know of no sects that expect the apocalypse to actually occur in coming days. Faiths that formerly talked that way are hedging. Some authorities had speculated that the close of the millennium might produce end-times eruptions. However, during panels on millennialism at a recent convention of the American Academy of Religion, an association for scholars in various religious fields, they shared no such expectations. *(The North Platte Telegraph, December 26, 1999)*

**“I turn back to your ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and I find myself wondering if we’re the generation that’s going to see that come about,” confided President Ronald Reagan to an American Jewish leader in the autumn of 1983. In response, President Reagan has stated that his belief in Armageddon would never keep him from seeking world peace. *(Keith W. Stump, in Plain Truth magazine)***

**Herman says to his wife while reading the newspaper which features the headline “End of World?” on the front page: “Did you see this? Three rooms of furniture for $15!” *(Jim Unger, in Herman comic strip)***

**God decided it was time to end the world, so he called together those whom he considered the three most influential people in the world -- Bill Clinton, Fidel Castro and Bill Gates. "The world will end," God told them. "You must go tell the people." President Bill Clinton made a live statement on CNN. "I have good news and I have bad news," he said. "The good news is that we have been right, there is a God. The bad news is that he is ending the world." Castro sent out a worldwide message to all Communists. "I have bad news and worse news," he said. "The bad news is that we have been wrong all along, there is a God. The worse news is that he is ending the world." Bill Gates got on his computer and sent out a worldwide e-mail on the Internet. "I have good news and I have better news," he wrote. "The good news is that God thinks I'm one of the three most influential people in the world. The better news is that we don't have to upgrade Windows '95!" *(Deborah Shields, in Reader's Digest, August, 1997, page 64)***

**Since the group’s establishment in 1884, the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ have been a cornerstone of the Jehovah’s Witnesses (officially known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society). In fact, in this century alone, the Society has officially predicted the end at least five times. The unofficial count (through rumors, speculation, and the like) is pretty impressive as well. In fact, the Watchtower magazine, the official Society organ, has stated that the end is coming “soon” in every single issue ever printed since its beginning in 1879 – a pretty clever way to get subscribers to renew, when you think about it. From the start, when Charles Taze Russell began preaching something he called the “Millennial Dawn,” he said Jesus had returned to earth invisibly in 1874 to set up his kingdom. Jesus would wait 40 years, through the “gentile times” (as described in Luke 21:24), and in 1914 would judge humanity and punish the wicked. By Russell’s estimation. October 2 would be the destruction date for the “Gentile nations.” On this day, chosen Witnesses would be taken to heaven, while Christ’s millennial reign on earth would begin. So did this happen? Hard to say. According to one Jehovah’s Witness leader, Russell bounded down the stairs to breakfast on the morning of October 2, “briskly clapped his hands and happily announced: “The Gentile times have ended.” Yet the milkman still came that day, the buses still ran, and worldly kingdoms had failed to topple. Seeing the standard for ideological gymnastics that the group carries on this day, Russell explained that Christ had indeed defeated Satan and established his Kingdom – only he had done it in the outermost heavens, where we mortals couldn’t see it. Worldly kingdoms, while still around, were now invalid. Russell said the public had misinterpreted his prophecy, which hadn’t stated explicitly that Christ would set up anything on earth. *(James Finn Garner, in Apocalypse Wow!, p. 45)***

The most ardent apocalyptic group, Jehovah’s Witnesses, fixed in turn upon 1881, 1914, 1918, 1920, 1925, the 1940s and 1975. The denomination also taught for eight decades that people living in 1914 would survive to see the end. But four years ago its Watchtower newspaper dropped that doctrine. *(The North Platte Telegraph, December 26, 1999)*

Literal-minded Christians draw many ideas from the biblical Book of Revelation, where chapter 20 depicts Jesus’ Second Coming and 1,000-year reign. But as Robert Royalty of Indiana’s Wabash College notes, Revelation “says nothing about years ending in a thousand.” *(The North Platte Telegraph, December 26, 1999)*

Cowering before the apocalypse: Ignorant Russians are hunkering down for the Mayan apocalypse, said Galina Stolyarova. Untold thousands of our citizens actually believe that civilization will collapse on Dec. 21, when the ancient Mayan calendar ends. Purveyors of “doomsday kits” are doing a brisk business selling packs containing everything you need to survive the meltdown, including matches, bandages, and – “this being Russia” – vodka. Even though most of us are either atheist or Russian Orthodox, some are buying indulgences online from a Roman Catholic Church in Italy, which guarantees absolution for our sins for less than $20. The panic is so widespread that one St. Petersburg lawmaker has called for a ban on media discussion of the Mayan prophecy. “Just why are modern-day Russians so gullible?” Blame the plunge in education standards since the breakup of the science-oriented USSR. These days, fully one third of Russians believe the sun orbits Earth, while around one fifth believe in aliens. “The nation that put the first man into space and has for years boasted the world’s best chess players is now drowning in superstition.” Unlike the Mayan apocalypse, that is a true catastrophe – but fortunately, it is also one we can do something about. *(The Week magazine, December 21, 2012)*

**The Mayan calendar indicates that the end of time is coming -- 10 years from now. The Long Count, the 5,200-year cycle calculated by the Maya, comes to a close on the winter solstice in 2012. Many New-Agers flocked to a Mayan site in Palenque, Mexico, on this year's solstice to mark the occasion. Ten years from now is probably not the end of the world. But it might be, says, Jose Arguelles, president of the Foundation for the Law of Time. The Mayan calendar is a 13-month, 28-day calendar, based on the moon. It is still accurate to within about three seconds -- closer to the mark than the Gregorian calendar. *(Associated Press, as appeared in Rocky Mountain News, December 23, 2002)***

**The end is not near: "We seem to be in an apocalyptic moment," said Michael Grunwald. The summer's crop of popular movies -- such as World War Z and This Is the End -- depicts a human race that is "basically screwed," and every day, the news is full of depressing stories about various crises, scandals, and trends. "Relax! The Apocalypse is not nigh." In fact, while the U.S. has many problems -- and always has -- things are on the upswing. In the fourth year of "a slow but steady recovery," the economy is adding close to 200,000 jobs a month -- a total of 6.8 million since the end of the Great Recession. The stock market has doubled in four years and is at a record high. Housing prices are coming back. The sequester hasn't derailed the economy. Inflation is very low. This year's federal deficit will be an estimated $642 billion -- half of what it was in 2008. America is not turning into Greece. Meanwhile, U.S. carbon emissions have dropped to the lowest level in two decades, and so have oil imports. Admittedly, all this good news would make for a boring summer movie -- but maybe we should enjoy it anyway. *(The Week magazine, June 21, 2013)***

As their name indicates, the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) also started with a strong millennial bent, and founder Joseph Smith expected the end around 1890. Since then, the faith has played down predictions. *(The North Platte Telegraph, December 26, 1999)*

**If there's anything that a study of history tells us, it's that things can get worse, and also that when people thought they were in end times, they weren't. *(Neil Gaiman, in The New York Times)***

**But did you know that nowhere in the Bible – from Genesis to Revelation – is there any mention of a future “battle of Armageddon”? Armageddon is described in the Bible as a place not an event. It is a place where armies gather. *(Keith W. Stump, in Plain Truth magazine)***

**Setting dates for the Second Coming of Christ began as early as the 14th century. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**Two pastors from the nearby Lutheran congregation are standing by the side of the county road pounding a sign stake into the ground. The hand-lettered sign reads: “Turn around. The end is near.” “Leave me alone, you religious nuts,” yells a truck driver as he speeds by. From around the curve in the road, the pastors hear screeching tires and a big splash. One pastor says to the other, “Do you think the sign should just say, ‘Bridge Out’?” *(George Kottwitz, in The Lutheran Witness)***

**If you're the sole survivor of the Apocalypse, go to your gym. There'll be somebody at the locker right next to yours. *(Alex Baze, in Reader's Digest)***

Some say the world will end in fire, some say in ice. From what I’ve tasted of desire I hold with those that favor fire. But if it had to perish twice, I think I know enough of hate to say that for destruction ice is also great and would suffice. *(Robert Frost)*

**Some historians believe that more battles have been fought there throughout time than at any other place in the world! These battles and others mentioned both in the Bible and in secular sources gave the valley of Megiddo an infamous reputation. It became a very symbol of war itself.** ***(Keith W. Stump, in Plain Truth magazine)***

**As the wise man says “The end is near!” Ernest asks: “Which way is it headed?” *(Bob Thaves, in Frank & Ernest comic strip)***

**The word “Armageddon” is found only once in all the Bible – in Revelation 16:16: “And he gathered them (the kings of the earth and their armies) together in a place which in the Hebrew tongue is called Armageddon.” *(Keith W. Stump, in Plain Truth magazine)***

**Don’t worry about this world ending today. It’s already tomorrow in Australia. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

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