

[ GRAPHIC ]

# It's the end of the world as we know it...

BY MELISSA WILSON

We humans are an unswervingly pessimistic bunch. Since almost the dawn of civilization, we've been trying to pin down the date for the apocalypse, only to be proven wrong again and again. Here are some of the more notable incorrect predictions, plus a few future dates you might want to mark down.

Astrologers forecast a flood epic enough to wipe Londoners off the map. Some 20,000 people left their homes, and one gullible priest built a fortress and stocked it with months' worth of food, water and supplies. When the predicted date came, not a drop of rain fell.



Every doomsayer and her kid brother thought Y2K would bring on the apocalypse due to the "millennium bug." Dozens of apocalyptic prophecies circulated, but when the clocks changed over, planes didn't fall from the sky and the world was not hit by a nuclear holocaust.



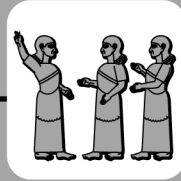
Some Christian fundamentalists believe that all true followers will soon rise en masse to heaven while non-believers will be left on earth to suffer. This event, known as the Rapture, is expected to lead to the Second Coming of Christ. Over the years, there have been dozens of predictions regarding its date, but so far none have panned out.



Nostradamus, the 16th-century astrologer who's been credited by some as foretelling the rise of Hitler and the attacks on the World Trade Center, published a series of prophecies that lay out the future until the year 3797. Some followers take this to mean that the world will end in 3797, though many skeptics argue that Nosty just ran out of predictions past that year.



2800 BCE



An Assyrian clay tablet predicted that "the world is speedily coming to an end" due to bribery and corruption. This is one of the earliest speculations that moral degeneration is a sign of societal end.

1910



Con artists, taking advantage of the popular belief that Halley's Comet would spew cyanide gas from its tail and contaminate the earth, sold "comet pills" designed to make one immune to the poison. Halley illuminated the sky in the spring of 1910, and again in 1986, without catastrophe.

2012



The ancient Mayan calendar is set to end on December 21, 2012, and many disaster chasers have taken this to mean the end of days. Predictions range from super volcanoes to the reversal of earth's magnetic field.

2060



Famed scientist Sir Isaac Newton studied the Bible for more than 50 years, intent on unlocking its secrets. He calculated that the world could come to an end in 2060.

7.5 Billion CE



According to scientists, the sun, having run out of fuel, will turn into a red giant and devour the earth whole. This will truly be the end of the world, but before this happens, earth will endure the effects of global warming, shifting continents and several ice ages.