

## Mayan Calendar Madness

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By Bruce Scofield

Just over 8 years ago some people were stockpiling food and preparing for what was called Y2K. It was thought that computers programmed only for 20<sup>th</sup> century dates would implode when 1999 became 2000 and chaos would erupt in our computer-driven society. Some people were very serious about this and resented any criticism or rejection of their extremist views. So New Year's Day came and went. One of my astrology programs became obsolete and a penny stock I held suddenly became worth 1,000x more than it was the day before, but this only lasted a few hours before it was corrected. Y2K was basically a dud, but it could have been worse if the problem hadn't been raised well ahead of time and potential problems were solved before the deadline. In this sense, the extremists did all of us a big favor.

We are now facing another deadline of sorts, this one marked not by computers but by the slow, relentless variation in the Earth's axial tilt called precession. This deadline is called 2012 and it was established by the ancient Maya. According to Maya inscriptions, we are now approaching the end of an age that began 5,125 years ago, in August of 3114 B.C.E. The end of the age occurs on December 21, 2012 – like Y2K an exact date. Today some people are already winding themselves up into a mild panic and, as with Y2K, are preparing for the worst. New books on this deadline are coming out every month and more and more people are being whipped into a frenzy. A couple years ago the History Channel began running a program called “Mayan Doomsday Prophecy” and you may have seen me commenting on the topic throughout the program. The producers worked very hard to get me to make some disturbing predictions because they know the public really likes to get scared. But I held my ground and tried to be as reasonable and realistic as possible. A few fanatical believers now regard me as being hopelessly ignorant of the subject.

A point I like to make, and it seems I have to make it over and over again to the vast majority entrained by 2012 who are woefully astrologically ignorant, is that 2012 is actually based on a kind of astrology. Like China, India and Mesopotamia, ancient Mesoamerica produced its own unique form of astrology and the calendar-like organization of time that is called “The Mayan Calendar” is really a kind of mundane astrology based on precession and Jupiter-Saturn cycles. Serious students of Maya culture call the 5,125-year period “The Long Count.”

The Maya perceived life as something occurring within a hierarchy of rhythmic pulses that can be divided into unique proportional sections. The fundamental mathematical proportions, based on the cycles of Venus, Sun and Moon, establish a pattern that is extended by analogy to much larger blocks of time. The 5,125-year Long Count or “Mayan Calendar” is actually a version of the 260-day astrological cycle on a large scale, or we could say the latter is a fractal of the former. There is an elegance to Mayan astrology that is rarely perceived by those who are only caught up in deadlines.

What will happen on 2012? Were the ancient Maya something very special – like a race from outer space as some wingnuts have suggested – or were they simply doing astrology their own way and were seeing more or less the same things as we see in Western astrology? In order to think clearly about this event we need to understand the astrological underpinnings and this requires a detailed look at the mythological and astrological traditions of these Native Americans from Mexico and Central America.