

NASA Debunks Mayan Apocalypse Theory of Dec. 21 Doomsday

With the Mayan apocalypse just days away, many are worried the world really will end on Friday. But NASA has released a video debunking the popular myth.

The video was meant to be released Saturday, the day after the predicted Mayan doomsday, but NASA released it last week to tell the public they'll still be here this weekend.

"If you're watching this video, it means one thing: The world didn't end yesterday," the video says.

In addition to the video, NASA also has a webpage answering common questions about the Mayan prophesy.

"The world will not end in 2012," NASA states on its website. "Our planet has been getting along just fine for more than 4 billion years, and credible scientists worldwide know of no threat associated with 2012."

NASA says the doomsday prediction began with claims that Nohor, a supposed planet the Sumerians discovered, is headed toward Earth. The catastrophe was initially predicted for May 2003, but was moved to December 2012 and, "linked to the end of one of the cycles in the ancient Mayan calendar at the 2012 winter solace—hence the predicted doomsday date of Dec. 21."

According to Live Science, Dec. 21, 2012 corresponds with the end of the 13th b'ak'tun of the Maya Long Count Calendar. The 400-year-long b'ak'tun is only one of the units of time the Maya used to mark cycles in their calendar, University of Texas Maya hieroglyph expert David Stuart says. According to Stuart, the complex, cyclical calendar included at least 24 different units of time.

NASA explains that just like any other calendar, the Mayan one doesn't end.

"This date is the end of the Mayan long-count period but then—just as your calendar begins again on January 1—another long-count period begins for the Mayan calendar."

As explained further in the NASA video, the Mayans had an expansive sense of time, and their calendar was created to keep count of long intervals (i.e. billions of years). It is the most complex calendar system ever developed.

NASA demonstrates that the calendar resembles an odometer in a car where the digits rotate. The calendar can roll over and repeat itself.

Maya theology says the world was created 5,125 years ago, on Aug. 11, 311 B.C. At that time, the Mayan calendar looked like 13 0 0 0 0. On Friday, it will look the same.

However, none of the Mayans' ruins or standing stones foretell an end of the world, NASA argues.

"For any claims of disaster or dramatic changes in 2012, where is the science? Where is the evidence? There is none, and for all the fictional assertions, whether they are made in books, movies, documentaries or over the Internet, we cannot change that simple fact."

As for whether we can expect any meteors by the year's end, NASA says it's not likely.

"The Earth has always been subject to impacts by comets and asteroids, although big hits are very rare. The last big impact was 65 million years ago, and that led to the extinction of the dinosaurs.

"Today NASA astronomers are carrying out a survey called the Spaceguard Survey to find any large near-Earth asteroids long before they hit. We have already determined that there are no

threatening asteroids as large as the one that killed the dinosaurs."