

New Year's Peeve

Kris King – December 31st 2011

<http://www.rantinaminor.co.uk/2011/12/new-years-peeve/>

I hope you've all managed to make a suitable recovery from the, no doubt, riotous fun you've been having over the past week? So, did you all enjoy your last christmas ever? I trust that you had a wonderful, gut-busting lunch or two, a stack of great presents, a few hefty drinks, and ... what? Yes, I did say it was your "last christmas ever", why? Didn't you know? According to a Mayan prophecy, and a worryingly large number of panicky, gullible idiots who foolishly believe in prophecies (despite their persistent failure over the millennia to actually come true), the world is going to end on December 21st 2012. They don't say how, just that it's "going to end" – a tad vague for something so important, don't you think? But, anyway, yeah, that was it, your last christmas, your last full year, and this will be your last New Year's Eve ever, so it might be worth making it one for whatever history books will remain after next year. Or, you know, you could just enjoy yourself knowing that it's all bollocks.

For those that don't have the faintest idea what I'm talking about, I'll keep this as simple as possible; I've already covered the whole non-subject of [rapture/armageddon/apocalypse](#) prophecy before, so there's no point in my going into any great detail again. Basically, 21st December 2012 is when the calendar created by the Mayans (a civilisation who lived in South America between around 2000BCE and approximately 1400CE) runs out and, according to them, all manner of bad shit will happen when it does. That's it. Seriously, there really isn't much more to it than that. It'd be like the mud-drenched ignorants of the dark ages getting into a massive panic over what happens when we get to the end of the year 999, because no-one had even for an instant contemplated the possibility of simply adding another digit. Actually, isn't that kind of what happened? A bunch of backward-thinking, intellectually-stunted shit-shovellers threw a major wobbler at the thought that the world was going to end on some numerically inevitable date?

It was as if *their* arbitrary method of marking time which began, curiously enough, when they first had the idea for it and ended only when they couldn't count any higher, had some kind of direct and fundamental connection to the universe such that it would bring about the end of everything when time reached the point where their ability to express themselves mathematically failed. Since what usually prompts the inception of most calendars is an event considered, by those concerned, to be of profound significance, the perceived end of such systems of chronology is seen as equally important, but in the opposite direction. So, as the hands of time approach some otherwise meaningless milestone that has been assigned a deeper purpose by someone who cannot justify it at all (but it's okay, because "this ancient book explains everything"), what happens? A bunch of backward-thinking, intellectually-stunted shit-shovellers throw a major wobbler at the thought that the world is going to end on some numerically inevitable date.

Now, I'm not talking exclusively about the Mayans or the dark age peasants of "Three-Digit AD" here; cast your minds back a decade or so and you'll realise that this is *exactly* what happened in the run up to the year 2000. An accidental, worldwide conglomeration of uninformed, delusional fucktards started wailing at anyone who would listen that the sky was falling, and I'm not just referring to the infamous and terrifyingly unproblematic "Y2K Bug". Throughout 1999, untold numbers of people entered a siege mentality and started hoarding food, water, weapons, and all variety of supplies for the armageddon they felt was coming, independent of whether or not their insurance company's computer could understand the difference between one century and the next. "It's the year 2000! It must *mean* something! Look at it! Look at what a big, round, important-sounding even number it is! Jesus has to be coming back this year, he just *has* to! All the prophecies about his return have been right so far, haven't they?"

Putting aside the insane beliefs of the religious that it had been two whole millennia since a Palestinian jew, of whose life there had been no extra-biblical documentation whatsoever, had been born; ignoring for a moment the fact that our calendars had changed a number of times since his apparent demise and that the 2000 year figure was therefore inaccurate; and discounting completely

the bible's claim that said zombie would return within the lifetime of his contemporaries, the idea that one single date was anything more than a perfectly normal, run-of-the-mill occurrence within the context of a simple system of chronological labelling, is patently absurd. For a start, it's not as if all the calendars, watches, video recorders, computers, or anything else with a facility for timekeeping, were somehow wired to the world's largest supply of explosives, rigged to detonate at midnight on January 1st, let alone that there was some manner of supernatural alarm clock set to awake a sleeping, apocalypse-happy deity.

Despite what bigoted homophobe and top trending Twitter twat @GodsWordIsLaw says, the world is not going to end on New Year's Eve, just as it didn't end when every other twaddle-flinging attention-whore throughout history said it would either. The planet, along with pretty much every inhabitant who fails to succumb to inevitable mortality at the expected rate, will still be here on both January 1st and December 22nd. There is no need to worry, no need to panic, we are all as safe as it is possible to be (except Keith, obviously, who is actually a little bit safer than the rest of us being, as he is, I believe, securely tucked up in a homo-proof blanket right against the far back wall of his closet along the border with Narnia – don't worry, he's got food, water, and a few pictures of Ricky Gervais to masturbate over, he'll be fine – just leave the door ajar so he can yell abuse about "the sodomites trying to give us all AIDS" or something).

This is not to say that some people won't experience what they feel to be the end of *their* world come the New Year. It is, apparently, a time when relationships have a statistically higher probability of coming to a premature, often acrimonious, end. We've all had a friend who spent an epoch or two on the phone bawling their eyes out about how their significant other "dumped me on New Year's Eve, the bastard/bitch, how could he/she?!" I don't know whether there is any truth to it being more likely you'll get dumped on New Year's Eve (I'd have said the odds are about 1 in 365), but it's entirely plausible. It is, after all, a night when a lot more alcohol is consumed, people are in a more celebratory mood, inhibitions are, well, non-existent, and the possibility for horseplay with someone who isn't your other half is therefore greatly increased. There are probably also a few people out there, douchebags I think they're called, who figure that once midnight ticks over their indiscretions are in another year and ultimately don't count.

I've never actually been dumped at New Year, although I did get a phone call at 5am on December 31st from an anxious fiancée who wanted to inform me (presumably before I heard it from someone else) that she'd rather unfairly had more sex in the previous 12 months than I had. Strangely, however, it wasn't this revelation that most pissed me off at the time (that would kick in later), neither was it the fact that this was 1999 and, as such, I was receiving the news of this adultery on the last day of the millennium (as you can guess, I didn't consider that terribly significant). No, what fucked me right off more than anything was that she was calling me at 5am, a time when most normal, sensible people are asleep (there are, in truth, good reasons for the time of this phone call which I shan't go into, if only because it ruins the impact of my confessing that I was more outraged at the time my future spouse called to tell me of her genital dalliance than I was by the act itself).

Being, as I am, a bit of a maverick when it comes to the normal rules of society, I decided not to go with what most people would consider the sensible, proper response to such news, and instead gave my wayward wench another chance. This might have had more to do with being desperately in love than my imagined status as a loose cannon on the deck of conventional wisdom, if I'm honest, but it did, ultimately, mark the beginning of the end; a little over a year later, we were done for good, although I'm very pleased to say that we were both able to get past such issues with relative ease and remain good friends to this day (it's entirely probable that she's reading this right now, in fact ... hello! Is this okay? You don't mind, do you? I've tried to be as discreet as possible while keeping the truth of the story intact. What do you mean, "tell them it's because you were crap in bed, go on!", how is that relevant? 😊 Sorry, I seem to have wandered off the point a little, do forgive me).

Whether it's avoiding planetary oblivion, or a small-scale armageddon in one's love life, there's no doubt that New Year's Eve, rather than being an enormous party to celebrate the boundless possibilities the future may bring whilst commemorating the past with a fond, appreciative backward glance, is a giant festival of stress, wrapped in nervous anxiety, and topped off lovingly with a bow made of self-reflexive panic. Even if you manage to survive the evening with your relationship in one piece, and without having had to endure a biblical tribulation, you're still compelled to look back on the previous 52 weeks and wonder just exactly what you've been doing with your life all this time. Where is the rationale in being *expected* by the world at large to spend the night getting toilet-hugingly drunk while contemplating how having spent every other night of the year getting toilet-hugingly drunk is actually a bad thing? It's like giving Wayne Rooney a truckload of condoms and

the keys to an old folks' home and telling him to spend some time there thinking long and hard about the direction his life is heading in.

Every year we are exhorted by the world and his self-help book to make some new year's "resolutions"; meaningless promises we offer ourselves about how we're going to make changes to the way we live our pointless, empty lives in the hope that we'll ultimately be better people. "That's it!" we declare, "I'm giving up smoking next year", before making it all the way to 10:23am on January 3rd when the knowledge that we're back at work kicks in and the soul-crushing, spirit-squashing mundanity of our lives forces us out into the cold, grey world for five minutes to enjoy a desperately needed ciggie. That's not to say one shouldn't strive to make improvements to one's day-to-day existence (or even one's life as a whole), but to apply all of the pressure to do so in the run up to a night of the year that has been designated as "the night" entirely for its symbolic value is simply inviting epic failure. The additional fact that most of these resolutions involve the cessation of indulgence right after we've been actively encouraged to revel in it doesn't help matters either.

To add yet more "I fucked your mum" type insult to the jugular-severing genre of injury, we are also expected to head out into the crisp air that hangs over those fresh, young days of the new year, locate a suitable high street brothel of commerce, and spunk whatever money there was that hadn't already been blown all over christmas' mulled wine-soaked face. As we blearily try to see through a hangover that feels like there's a myopic carpenter inside our heads going crazy with a nail gun whilst spinning around on a gyroscope, we find ourselves willingly handing over our credit and debit cards to buy the same shit for ourselves that we paid 50% more for only a week earlier when buying it for someone else. The final, steaming heap of dung in the punchbowl comes when you stagger past this year's new crop of exercise DVDs and realise that we're being told to lose that christmas flab by the very same celebrities who spent the previous month advertising the supermarkets we bought all that fucking food from to begin with.

You may be wondering at this point whether this oh-so happy-clappy post is turning into an extended edition of "Grumpy Old Men", and I can kind of understand why. I fully appreciate, for instance, that I'm expressing such sufficiently huge quantities of cynicism about the whole thing that even the most optimistic, fairy-headed flower child would run screaming to the nearest bomb shelter for fear that the world's largest warehouse of dream-catchers was burning to the ground before their eyes. It's not that I'm inherently down on the idea of new year celebrations, not at all; it's more that I've never been able to get past all the unnecessary bollocks that surrounds them – whether it's the societal pressure imposed upon us by centuries of tradition, or the commercial pressure applied by those who ride the coat-tails of tradition in order to get us to spend our money, it all feels like yet another fun thing that we humans used to do that we have thoroughly bum-raped for no adequately explored reason.

I've had more than my fair share of new year's eve nights out and, without fail, it would *always* end up with me getting atrociously drunk and spending several days afterwards with my head wrapped in multiple pillows (to block out the light) while wondering what the bloody hell the point was. It was never just a simple case of trudging through the self-pity and regret of having foolishly welcomed such an evil hangover into my world on the first day of the new year (and consequently setting the bar quite low for the next 12 months); rather it was thinking that we really *suck* at celebrating. Every so often I would get a flash of clarity as I looked around at my fellow revellers, and I could never stop myself from thinking, "Seriously, people, come on! What's *wrong* with you?!" You might think of it as a symptom of getting older, I like to think of it as a perk that comes with age and experience, but there seems to be an inevitable sense that one is turning into a more sophisticated hedonist as 40 approaches.

I've gotten far better, for example, at drinking the largest quantities of just the right kind of alcohol so that I can get perfectly inebriated, with all the opportunities for enjoyment and mischief that presents, but without having some of my best times committed to memory through an impossibly nauseous blur. Having done the binge-drinking thing for an extended period in my early adulthood (mostly while at university, I'm sure you won't be surprised to learn), I can declare with absolute authority that it really isn't any fun whatsoever. You might be able to fool yourself for a few years into thinking that grunting loudly into the toilet and wiping bilious, vomity spit from your chin at the end of every night out is the textbook definition of "good times", but you're wrong, and you will, hopefully, eventually learn this before one day regurgitating your entire liver into the U-bend of your kharsi. Am I moralising here? No, not really, I'm just pointing out that I'm probably a far more accomplished drunk than you ...

You can, of course, completely ignore me and head right out to get as wasted as a papal penis and make an absolute twat of yourself in a spectacularly grand, and very public, way. You could, as I have in the past, wake up in January on the floor of the bathroom, bollock-naked, hugging the toilet, and wondering why you thought sleeping there for five hours was preferable to a warm bed and an emergency bucket on standby. You could make a whole list of things to change about yourself, and promise that you're **really** going to stick to it this time. You could, as I have in the past, fail miserably at quitting anything because you were too ambitious by trying to quit **everything** (that and you ultimately didn't *want* to give up drinking or smoking, and there was no way you were going to delete all of that porn after the time you spent downloading it). It's not for me to tell you how to usher in the new year ...

All that I can rightfully tell you is that, in my experience, the best way to approach the new year is to see it as an *opportunity* to make changes, rather than a compulsion or imperative. The date of January 1st has no inherent meaning, it's purely symbolic, and when we assign such undeserved significance to the day whilst hitching our personal horses to it, we open ourselves up for failure because of the insurmountable pressure we've inadvertently put on ourselves to succeed. We evolve in steady increments, not just biologically but emotionally and psychologically too, and we are more likely to become better people if we improve ourselves one bit at a time – look at that friend you've got who made a million and one changes to their life in one go and then ended up going completely mental because they couldn't sustain it. You don't need to bully yourself into fundamentally changing the way you live, just as you don't need to force yourself into enjoying the evening the way everyone else does. Take it easy ... *savour* life ...

As to what I'm doing tonight, well, I shall be enjoying a fabulous curry, a bottle of champagne, some Skyrim on the PS3, and maybe a bit of Tim Minchin at the Royal Albert Hall, with my boyfriend and our best mate. Perhaps some nice choccies, a smoke or two, a few scotches, then a nice hot chocolate before curling up in bed with the one I love ... we might have naughty man sex, we might not, depends on how we feel. Speaking of man-on-man action, I wonder what Keith, aka @GodsWordIsLaw, aka CFAMW (Closets For A Misanthropic Wanker) will be doing? Drafting a list of excuses as to why his predicted rapture didn't happen? Watching his way through his beloved Ricky Gervais DVD collection? Either way, I know every last one of us will be having more fun than he because we will be sharing the love of good friends and good times, as opposed to wallowing in narrow-minded hatred and bigotry.

While I don't know what the new year will bring, I do know one thing; it won't be the last – we'll all get to repeat our mistakes many more times before our individual worlds end. So, however you spend this night, and every other, make it a good one, and I'll see you all on Twitter in the morning for "The @GodsWordIsLaw Post-Rapture Back-Peddalling Extravaganza" 🤪

Happy new year, everyone ...

