

# TOPIC OF THE WEEK

## . Are these the ways . our world will end?

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Earth faces a plethora of threats in this collage-like illustration. From the upper right, an incoming asteroid impacts Earth. At the bottom, an active Sun bedecked with prominences unleashes a flare and a coronal mass ejection. At left, a nearby supernova bombards Earth with fatal radiation, causing aurorae to dance above the planet. And Earth's oceans are in the process of boiling away — the ultimate fate of our world in roughly 1 billion years, due to the Sun's gradual increase in brightness. Credit: Ron Miller

**The universe is a terrifying place, filled with existential threats. Earth may seem quite solid beneath our feet, but the continued existence of the thin layers of rock, water, and air that sustain us is in no way guaranteed. Errant asteroids, soaring superflares, and exploding supernovae are just a few of the calamities that might befall our fragile world.**

In the short term, we may be able to manage or mitigate some of these threats. Asteroids can be diverted and power grids hardened. But other apocalypses are inevitable as the solar system ages: a runaway Moon, Earth's collapsing magnetosphere, the Sun's flagging heart. Each one represents a countdown to a different apocalypse, with some more imminent than others.

Source: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W9gbrSRx6n8XdYdsht7dkdaNE0Y1C2\\_QFbO3rP-viqE/edit?tab=t.0](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W9gbrSRx6n8XdYdsht7dkdaNE0Y1C2_QFbO3rP-viqE/edit?tab=t.0)