Days of Mourning—Are You Ready for Tragedy?

As families and friends of the victims of Dana Air Flight 992 in Nigeria know all too well today—the end can come quickly and tragically. Disasters strike everywhere in our dark world. Yet although we might not be prepared for these events in many ways, we can be spiritually prepared. Are you?

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Asking for Wisdom

We desperately need wisdom and guidance from our heavenly Father for all aspects of our lives. And God is glad to give it to us. Don’t miss our weekly devotional series at www.amazingfacts.org.

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AFCOE in the Philippines

The Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism in the Philippines—PAFCOE—is experiencing incredible blessings as students prepare a harvest for Jesus. Get regular updates from our evangelist Lowell Hargreaves at the link below!
Spam
Not spam
Forget previous vote
Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan has declared three days of national mourning for the 153 victims (with more expected) of Dana Air Flight 992, which crashed into a furniture works and printing press building in a Lagos neighborhood on Sunday, June 3, 2012. All the passengers were killed after the McDonnell Douglas MD-83 plane reported engine trouble 11 miles from the airport. When attempting to approach a runway for landing the plane hit a power line and landed on its tail.

"President Goodluck Jonathan visited the scene Monday after declaring three days of mourning and ordering an investigation. Nigerian flags flew at half staff Monday. The aircraft lost altitude rapidly and plowed into a residential building and a printing works before bursting into flames. The fear is that since it happened in a residential area, there may have been many people killed," Yushau Shuaib, a spokesman for Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency, told the Associated Press. [1]

"The wreckage of the commercial airliner continued to smolder early Monday as emergency workers carried bodies and debris from the crash site in a residential neighborhood. In an interview with VOA English to Africa, presidential adviser Reuben Abati said it was too soon to say what caused the crash. 'What the president has done, in addition also, is to order an immediate investigation into the cause of the crash,' said Abati. 'I think what you should do is to await the outcome of the investigation. At this moment everyone is in shock, including the president, and what you have on your hands is a community of people who are grieving." [2]

"Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan declared three days of national mourning. He noted that the accident had ‘sadly plunged the nation into further sorrow on a day when Nigerians were already in grief over the loss of many other innocent lives in the church bombing in Bauchi state’. Jonathan also pledged that ‘every possible effort’ would be made to boost the nation's aviation safety." [3]

We grieve with the nation of Nigeria and pray for the families of the victims of this terrible tragedy.

As we consider events leading up to the second coming of Christ, we know such crises will come to our earth (see Matthew 24). Mourning will be in the hearts of all, but all grief will not be the same. Some will mourn over their sins. Such repentance will prepare hearts for Christ’s coming. But some will mourn because of the lost opportunities to know Jesus. Such wailing is described in Revelation: “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him” (Revelation 1:7).

When Christ comes to our earth, what type of mourning will you experience?

If you would like to learn more about the signs of Christ’s soon return, please visit one of our upcoming seminars and learn about preparing to meet Jesus.
Asking for Wisdom

An Amazing Fact: In the 17th century people began calling the third molars “the teeth of wisdom.” Later, this was shortened to “wisdom teeth.” The name has some basis in fact, since these teeth tend to appear during the transition into adulthood and by the time a person’s brain reaches its full development, which is about 25 years of age.

The Message: Solomon started out his kingship with the right attitude. He knew he needed discernment in order to be a good king, and he knew only God could provide it. Bowing before the Lord, he humbly prayed for wisdom, referring to himself as “a little child.”

In the same sense, we are all little children. We desperately need wisdom and guidance from our heavenly Father for all aspects of our lives. And God is glad to give it to us. “If any of you lacks wisdom,” the Bible tells us, “let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5). Here’s a promise we could claim every day!

Paul prayed that the early Christian believers would receive “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him [Jesus]” (Ephesians 1:17). And we know that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10). Knowing and honoring Christ is where wisdom begins.

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Key Bible Text: “Now, o Lord my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. … Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil” (1 Kings 3:7, 9).

Posted on June 04, 2012 09:49 by Amazing Facts Editor
Life and Experiences from the Philippine AFCOE

"Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God."

MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2012

Another update from PAFCOE

This is an update that Dad just wrote:

What's happening at PAFCOE? We've been busy! The five-week "Mysteries of Prophecy Seminar" ended a week ago, with 84 baptized (79 on Sabbath and 5 earlier), and more planned for the end of April. One of our students, Jowel, had 15 of his Bible study interests baptized! He was thrilled.

One of those fifteen was a lady named Beth. Her husband, working in Saudi Arabia, had attended Adventist schools when growing up, but was discouraging her to join the church. His father, Beth's father-in-law, is a stroke victim, but had been studying the Bible with Jowel. When PAFCOE started, Aylani Hill, an AFCOE graduate that has been teaching home remedies here at PAFCOE, took some of her students to his home, and began giving him treatments. Amazingly, he began to recover feeling in the side of his body affected by the stroke. He decided to get baptized, along with his granddaughter Bethany, Beth's daughter.

When I visited in their home, Beth told me that her only hesitation for baptism was her husband. As we talked, I ask her, "Beth, if Jesus came here and asked you, ‘Beth do you love me?’; what would you tell Him." Without hesitation, she responded, "Yes." I replied, "and if He were to ask you, ‘Beth, do you love me enough to get baptized this Sabbath?; what would you say to Him?’" She smiled and said quietly, "I'd have to tell Him, ‘Yes.'"

Beth together with her daughter and both in-laws were baptized a week ago in the blue waters of the ocean. Her father-in-law was one of the last baptized. Four pastors carried him out into the ocean in a plastic chair, and gently buried him, chair and all, in the water.

The baptism spot was behind one of the local Adventist churches in the southern part of Iloilo City. It was a beautiful location, and a beautiful baptism. You can read more about it, and see pictures at www.pafcoe.blogspot.com, Teresa's blog. You can also view our video updates at www.pafcoe.org or on YouTube. Just type in "pafcoe" to see video updates for each week.

Now that the Evangelistic series is over, life has slowed down—slightly. We are doing follow-up meetings for the interests once a week, along with our students doing follow-up visitation and Bible Studies. Classes at PAFCOE during the day, still keep us busy.
It has been a thrill to have a team of twenty-five students helping out with this past series of meetings. Teaching classes during the day, and conducting a full-scale evangelistic effort in the evenings, has left little time for anything but the absolute essentials. And even those were crowded out occasionally! We apologize for not sending a report last month.

Now our focus is getting all the details together for the Student Seminars that will take place during the month of May. There are nineteen sites across the Philippines, along with two more locations where the PAFCOE staff will be holding meetings. This is part of the PAFCOE training we offer here—sending the students out either singly or in pairs to conduct their own evangelistic efforts.

Excitement is running high among the students, along with a few threads of fear about doing their very first evangelistic series, but all are really looking forward to the experience.

The student meetings will all be conducted on a “shoe-string” budget, but we praise God for the “shoe-strings” He has sent, and we are moving forward with our shoes tied! The participating churches are covering the costs of food, housing, and transportation for our PAFCOE speakers, and we are praying that God will multiply the loaves and fishes.

Again, thank you for your prayers and support!

Your friends,
Pastor Lowell, family, and team,
PAFCOE (Philippine Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism)

Posted by Teresa at 10:11 AM
Q. Does the Bible say by what name we should call God?

A. I’m sure you have had someone come to your house explaining that “Jehovah” is the only appropriate name to call God. There are others who believe that it must be “Yahweh,” which is the sacred name of God.

But I respectfully disagree with the notion that God desires we call Him by one name over another. In reality, God goes by many names in the Bible. It is true that God says to Moses in Exodus 6:3, “I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.” However, here God simply reveals to them a new name. And you will find that God continues to reveal new names throughout the Bible. He never says we should use just one name when calling on or referencing Him.

Those who become preoccupied with the idea that we must only address God by one name are, in a certain way, making their God smaller. Indeed, God’s names tell us about His character. For instance, He also says we should call him Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, and Everlasting Father.

Jesus also has many names: He’s called Alpha and Omega, the Lamb, the Beginning and the End, the Gate, the Door, and Son of God… so many names it would be impractical to list all of them here! The real issue is not by what name we should use when speaking with God, though it should always be done with reverence, holiness, and a sense of awe.

The real issue is whether or not we honor and exalt His Word. Psalm 138:2 says, “You have magnified Your word above all Your name.” Indeed, each language has different names to refer to God; but the real uniting force is how God’s Word transcends language, or simple words, and affects all people regardless of the name one chooses to call Him.
What is 2012?

2012 phenomenon comprises a range of eschatological beliefs according to which cataclysmic or transformative events will occur on December 21, 2012. But is it true? Find out on BibleProphecyTruth.com. This website will help answer the questions about what is 2012, does it follow bible prophecy, and earthquake predictions as how they fit in to Bible Prophecy. Discover more on BibleProphecyTruth.com right now.

When Tom went to the movies one night in 2009, he had no idea that his life would change as a result. After the house lights dimmed, one of the coming attractions was for the movie 2012. It supposedly chronicled the end of the world as predicted by ancient prophecies.

Tom actually remembered more about that movie trailer than he did about the feature film. He had heard in the past the strange things about the year 2012, but seeing the violent images on the screen made him realize that he needed to know more, even if only to prove it was all untrue.

As Tom began his research into the various 2012 predictions, his mind raced with endless questions: What is 2012 all about? Is this the end times? How will the world really end? When will it end? What is this Mayan prophecy? Does the Bible say anything about the issue? Many people today share his concerns, and as 2012 wears on, fear and suspicion about the end of the world is growing. People have serious questions, and they’re looking for serious answers.

The Mayan Calendar

The reason most people associate the year 2012 with a cataclysmic event is because of the calendar of the ancient Mayans, a tribe of people native to Central America and who predated European exploration there. The Mayan calendar divides time into several units, the longest being 144,000 days long, or approximately 394 years, called a b’ak’tun. According to this calendar, the thirteenth b’ak’tun of world history concludes on December 21, 2012.

The calendar itself actually says nothing about why this date is important. Rather, it has been the speculation and hype generated by enthusiasts and experts of Mayan culture over the last century that has led to the 2012 phenomenon. While there is some evidence that the ancient Mayan people anticipated a big event on this future date, the evidence is incomplete as to what that event could be.

Thus, most of the fear and excitement around the year 2012, and the specific date of December 21, is almost entirely speculative. In fact, the same calendar also makes mention of dates beyond the thirteenth b’ak’tun, further calling into doubt whether even the people responsible for the calendar were anticipating the end of the world later this year.

There is no shortage of predictions about what, if anything, will happen before the end of 2012—and these predictions often contradict each other.

For Tom, learning more about the mysteries of 2012 yielded more questions than answers.

After combing through endless pages of research about the Mayans, geomagnetic reversals of the Earth, cosmic alignments, black holes, solar flares, invisible planets, alien invasions, and the like, he found no solid evidence that any of the leading theories were even remotely true. Almost ready to give up his search for truth about the end of the world, one day Tom found an article that discussed prophecies of the Bible. His attempts to search the Bible for answers had, in the past, been unfruitful. He also realized there is no clear consensus among Christian churches as to the meaning of many prophetic symbols. But the
article he found was different. It used the Bible as the primary source of information; it offered explanations that made sense; and it ultimately ended his search for truth, because he knew he had finally found it.

**Jesus Christ and the End of the World**

Tom learned that no one and no thing gets to destroy the world except the One who made it in the first place. Indeed, the Bible assures us that human life on Earth will not come to an end because of a black hole, nuclear war, supernova, global contagion, or anything of the sort. Rather, the Bible promises that God, in the person of Jesus Christ, will one day return to the Earth to rescue His people, put an end to sin, and usher in His eternal kingdom, where death and illness no longer reign. For believers in the Bible, the atrocities and hardships of the world can never eclipse the hope of God’s kingdom to come.

The Bible gives us many insights into how people will experience Christ’s return. Jesus Himself underscores the importance of knowing these things in order to avoid deception. Christ tells us, “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24). This had been Tom’s experience in the past. He read many conflicting accounts of Christ’s return from several different authors, all claiming to be authoritative. But he had never before read it straight from the Bible.

Tom was relieved to learn that, despite claims made in popular novels on the subject, the return of Jesus will be anything but secret. Jesus says, “The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” Immediately following these signs, the inhabitants of Earth “will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29, 30).

Christ’s return will be such a magnificent event that the Bible promises that everyone alive, both good and evil, will witness it. Scripture says, “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be,” and, “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him” (Matthew 24:27; Revelation 1:7). Additionally, Christ will return with a shout so loud that even people in their graves will hear it and be roused from their deathly sleep. “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.” God also promises those who are still alive at Christ’s return, “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

Will this truly be what many anticipate as “the end of the world”? The Bible is very clear that the Earth will be desolate after Christ’s return. God’s people will go with Christ to heaven, but many will choose against God and reject this reward. Despite the sacrifice Jesus made for them at the cross, they will choose to “[gather] together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army,” to attempt to literally fight with God when He returns, rather than enter into God’s kingdom with Him (Revelation 19:19). Having rejected God’s offer of eternal life, they will be “killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse” (Revelation 19:21). The Bible also describes the condition of the Earth when these events are complete. “I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; And the heavens, they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth. I beheld, and indeed there was no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled” (Jeremiah 4:23–25).

Tom delighted in this knowledge because it meant that God foreknows and is in control of human history, that a believer in God has no need to fear what might happen in the world. Nothing is random. The battle against evil will someday end.

**A Bible Calendar**

Despite these reassurances, however, Tom doubted. Though he believed in God, he wanted more proof. He reasoned, “At least the Mayans had a calendar!”

The Bible does not offer a calendar to mark Christ’s return (see Matthew 24:36), but it
contains something better: fulfilled prophecy. Tom found out about the prophecy in Daniel chapter 2, and his doubts disappeared. The ancient prophet recorded the experience of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar in the early 600s BC. God gave the king a dream that he did not understand, but God revealed the meaning of the dream to the prophet Daniel, who then told it to the king. The dream was actually a prophecy of world history from Nebuchadnezzar’s time until Christ’s return!

The Bible promised that Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom, Babylon, would one day fall to another kingdom, which would in turn fall to a third. The Bible later names these kingdoms as Medo-Persia and Greece, respectively. Greece would then fall to a strong and brutal fourth kingdom. This kingdom would itself not be conquered, but would rather dissolve into ten smaller nations. These nations would exist, in one form or another, until Christ’s return.

Tom was amazed to learn that Medo-Persia did, indeed, conquer Babylon in 539 BC, and was then conquered by Greece in 331 BC. Greece reigned until 168 BC, when it was conquered by Rome. The iron monarchy of Rome, famous for its brutality, including the invention of crucifixion, was never conquered by anyone. It dissolved in 476 AD, and ten prominent tribes of people emerged from the empire’s ruins. Seven of those ten survived to become the nations of Europe today.

Tom was convinced! If God was able to accurately describe the progression of human history over a period of more than 2,600 years, including our modern days, then God would certainly also be accurate about His promises to return and begin His eternal kingdom. Tom sought after and learned more about the prophecies in the Bible, and his certainty of Christ’s soon return increased with every new thing he learned. Unlike the Mayan calendar and the speculation surrounding the date December 21, 2012, the Bible offers great detail about the changes taking place in our world today. To those who desire to learn them, God has messages of comfort and reassurance. We can know what to expect to happen on the Earth, and what to expect in God’s kingdom afterward. We can face a future that only seems uncertain with the certainty of God’s promises.

Tom had lived a life of fear before learning the Bible. Mysteries like the ancient Mayan calendar filled him with dread, and society fueled those fears with movies like 2012. But God removed that fear by revealing to Tom that history would not draw to a close in a haphazard manner or by chance. No matter how difficult or frightening the events of Earth might be, God has promised an eternal kingdom of perfection afterward and has proven its surety to reasonable men and women through the accurate fulfillment of Bible prophecy throughout time.

The invitation is open to all to be part of this kingdom. “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). We invite you to respond to God’s invitation today.

Sign up for our free online Bible School