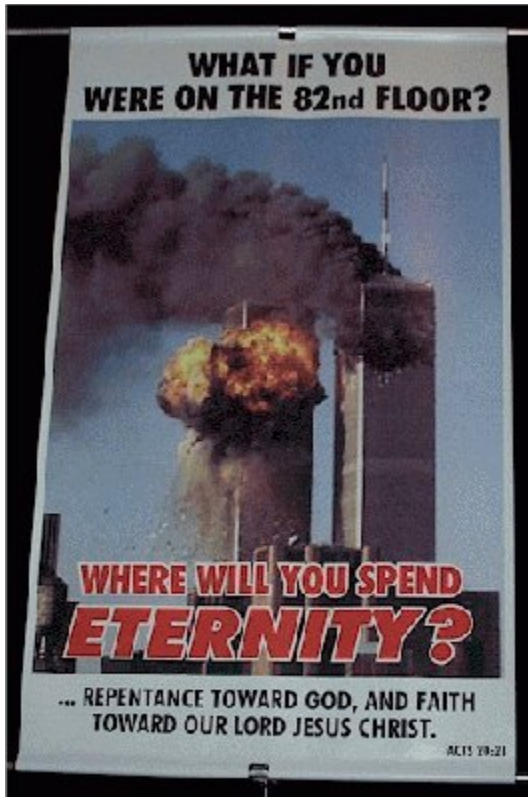


What if you were on the 82nd floor?



Jesus said:

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

(Mt. 10:28)

Dear Reader:

Have you ever thought about what your death would be like? Maybe you expect to die in old age in a peaceful surrounding. The fact is: you can not tell under which circumstances you are going to die, whether you die at age 92 during your sleep or fall asleep while driving home from work after a 12-hour night shift as part of your 72 hour work week.

Do you fear death? Have you ever imagined what the passengers on those hijacked planes had to go through when Muslim terrorists crashed them into the World Trade Center? Have you ever thought what people in the WTC had to go through in the upper stories of those buildings?

The exploding jet fuel caused an enormous heat wave. Steel melted and lost its stability. Concrete was crushed to pieces and fell down. A horrible cloud of fire and smoke was all over Manhattan when the two towers fell. But I want to tell you today that there is something even worse: *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"* (Rev. 20:15) *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."* (Rev. 21:8) *"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his image."* (Rev. 14:11) The events of September 11, 2001 are all over now, but that lake of fire will burn forever and those that have rejected Christ will spend eternity there. This scenario described in the Bible is much worse than September 11th. Some people fear the threat of further terrorism, but let us rather fear God who will judge the dead and living from the White Throne. I hope your name is found in the book of life. If your name is written there you will have a glorious eternity in the joy of the Lord. There will be no more death,

sorrow, crying, nor pain. September 11th brought a lot of pain, but understand that the pains of hell are much greater. Let us read about Lazarus and the rich man. While Lazarus got saved and was carried into Abraham's bosom, the rich man was in hell and he said: *Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*" (Lk. 16:24) This was terrible eternal suffering for the rich man and he begged to get just a little relief, but it was too late. The fires of hell are much worse than the fires of September 11th. Let us help all people to escape the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7). *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."* (Acts 3:19) *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him* (Romans 5:8,9).

So there is salvation freely available to rescue us from the pains of hell. So how should a child of God respond to a situation where death is imminent, such as the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center? How should a child of God on the 82nd floor deal with the approaching destruction? The Bible says in Philippians 1:20-24: *"... so also now Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ: which is far better: Nevertheless to abide with you is more needful for you."* These words were spoken by the Apostle Paul and he did not show any fear of death, but in contrast he had a **desire to depart!** Child of God, do you have a desire to depart and to be with Jesus? That is what death is all about once you are saved. It is nothing but the gate that will lead you to Christ, the New Jerusalem, and a new resurrected, perfect body that won't age or get sick with cancer, arthritis and other diseases! Praise God! Paul identified totally with Jesus, whether in life or death. He thought we could actually magnify the Lord through death! When people know you have been born again and they hear the news of your death, they will remember that you witnessed to them about heaven, hell, and how to be saved. Then they will know that you have made it to that heavenly resting place. Yes, you can magnify the Lord and preach (without words) a great evangelistic sermon when you die as a born again believer. The only reason why Paul considered it needful not to depart from this life was the Lord's work down here through preaching the Gospel, planting churches, and teaching the believers. Paul also says: *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* (Gal. 2:20) Paul clearly states that since his conversion Christ lives within him and Christ overcame death, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of God. If you are saved, Christ lives in you and you have overcome death, too. Paul was aware of what it says in Psalm 116:15: *"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."* Death is not that gruesome, painful, horrific experience we are conditioned to think in the ultra-materialistic western world. The thought of death is unbearable to those who at the threshold of death must leave behind all they have lived and worked for. Nice mansions in expensive subdivisions, expensive German sports cars, stocks & bonds, college degrees, thriving businesses, snow mobiles, boats, vacation homes, SUVs, RVs, ATVs, genuine John Deere riding mowers, hunting

and fishing equipment. All that stuff won't go. If you go on an airplane, you can take two items of luggage with you, as long as they don't exceed a certain weight or size. But on that flight to eternity nothing will go with you. You won't need corruptible things in the place of incorruption. *"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can take nothing out."* (1. Tim. 6:7) But remember, if you are saved - if you are a saint - death is in fact something precious as it says in that verse in Psalm. So rid your mind of all the negative notions of death and don't look back on your materialistic stuff. When the Lord calls you home - through whatever circumstance - something precious is going on. Praise God!

In Hebrews 9:27 it says clearly that it is appointed to us once to die, after this the judgment. If Christ is your Lord and you endure the temptations of this world, you will not be condemned for anything. The blood of Christ covers your sins and you will receive a crown of life (James 1:17).

You don't have to fear death when Christ lives in you. When Jesus died on the cross for your sin, he said: *"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."* (Lk.24:46) I hope you can say just that when you know the end of your life is nearing. When Jesus spoke these words he *"gave up the ghost"*. His fleshly body was dead on the cross, but his spirit was released and at the same day he was in the paradise of God (**see Luke 24:43**). Then Jesus rose from the dead and triumphed in victory over death. *"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"* (1. Cor. 15:54,55) If you are lost and don't know Christ, death is your greatest enemy. If you are saved by grace and know Jesus Christ, death is nothing but a toothless lion. He won't hurt you.

Because of this great confidence Paul could continuously face situations that would bring him near death. He endured great trials, persecutions, and even shipwrecks. *"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we **despaired even of life**: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which **raiseth the dead**: Who **delivered** us from so great a death, and **doth deliver**: in who we trust that he **will yet deliver** us."* (2. Cor. 1:8-10) Paul had to suffer great persecutions. Stripes were laid on him with a whip. On another occasion he was stoned: *"And there came thither [Derbe] certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, **having stoned Paul**, drew him out of the city, **supposing he had been dead**. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city ..."* (Acts 14:19,20) Paul was almost dead at this point. When he arose again he could have retired from the ministry after such rude persecution and hard labor. But this man continued because he knew he could magnify Christ through death and that dying is gain and precious in the sight of the Lord. If you were on the 82nd floor of the World Trade Center, then you don't need to trust anymore in yourself, but rather trust in the Lord who raises the dead. Allah and Buddha can't raise anybody from the dead. Allah is nothing but an invention of man. A being that is supposed to dwell in a meteorite in Mekka (Saudi Arabia) called the 'Caaba'. Thus, Islam is a primitive form of animism. That is why Muslim pilgrims gather in Mekka to that piece of meteorite to worship. The Muslim terrorists are burning in hell and begging for a chance to get out. But as with the rich man

in Luke 16 this request can not be granted. God made a final decision. If you were on the 82nd floor as a child a of God your desire to depart and to be with Christ ought to grow stronger than any fears and worries about what is going on. Only few people had a chance to survive. Thousands died. Those that were saved by the grace of God departed to be with Christ.

In Acts chapter 27 we read about a shipwreck experience the Apostle Paul had to go through and he did not panic like some did and he did not behave selfishly as some did (see Acts 27:30-32), but rather he was calm, in control of the situation, and he communed with God. Paul was so calm and in control that he could make specific recommendations to the centurion who steered the ship (see Acts 27:9,10,21-26). Even in a shipwreck situation Paul remained prayerful and received instruction from the Lord (see Acts 27:21,23,35). Those who captured the events of September 11th on video began cussing and blaspheming against God the very moments the planes crashed. Even in other plane crashes the cockpit voice recorder captures the last words of some unsaved crew in the cockpit and they uttered the vilest of cusswords and blasphemies. Lord, have mercy on us sinners. Why didn't they pray in the last couple of seconds? Why didn't they say: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit"? Why didn't they seek the Lord? Why didn't they ask Jesus to save their soul? Instead, they used a variety of cusswords and those cusswords would turn into their eternal reality seconds later. They died without hope. During their lifetime, they ignored the words of their Christian grandparents, they ignored the church, they threw away dozens of gospel tracts, they ridiculed the street preacher, they changed the channel when there was a preacher on TV, they turned the dial on the radio when there was gospel music, they sued the co-worker who witnessed on the workplace, they cussed out the young Christians who came knocking at their doors, etc. And when death is approaching they realize they have no hope in them for eternity. May God help us. My friend, if you were on the 82nd floor, would you be ready to depart and be with Christ?

Write your reply here:
