

214 IS GOING DOWN!

On December 9th, 1963, I heard something over the radio the like of which I had never heard before—and certainly never wish to hear again. I heard the last words of the pilot on No. 214, a big jet plane that crashed to earth with 81 persons aboard.

Because of weather conditions the air traffic was heavy around the Philadelphia airport, so the airport tower had just asked the pilot: “Do you want to go on or do you want to hold?” The pilot had barely replied that he wanted to “hold,” when somebody in the cockpit said something about the big Boeing 707 being on fire. Then came the awful words: “*We’re going down. Two Fourteen is going down in flames.*” He said it calmly, and the Philadelphia tower answered back: “We have your message, Two Fourteen.”

Just imagine, hearing the actual last words of the pilot while he and eighty others were being hurled more than 5,000 feet to their death amid the flaming parts of their stricken plane!

Yet, one does not have to be in an airplane to meet death suddenly. He can stumble off a curb and be killed, or die suddenly in a hundred different ways.

We do not wish to frighten people into accepting Christ as Savior, but it is a fact that we ought to think more about the uncertainty of life and prepare for the time when we are called to meet God. Proverbs 22:3 says:

“A wise man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but fools pass on and are punished.”

It is just plain folly to go on thoughtlessly, as though this life were never to end and the next were never to begin, when we know that the opposite is true. Moreover, the Bible says: “*after death the judgment*” (Heb. 9:27). Any truly wise person, then, will seriously consider death and seek the proper means to prepare for it.

Thank God, “*Christ died for our sins*” (I Cor. 15:3), He “*bore our sins in His own body on the tree*” (I Pet. 2:24), He “*suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God*” (I Pet. 3:18).

This is why St. Paul was sent forth to proclaim “*the gospel of the grace of God*”—the good news that sinners may be saved by grace, through faith in the One who died for all our sins.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8,9).

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:4,5).

One more thing: You may assent to all this, but if you do not *act* on it you may still be suddenly called to meet God totally unprepared. So act upon it *now*. Put your trust in Christ as your own personal Savior.

—C. R. Stam

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