

## “The Day the Shuttle Columbia Fell”

⇒ **Text:** James 4:10-17

⇒ **Introduction:**

- No one will ever forget what happened 17 years and 12 days ago on Tuesday, January 28, 1986, at 11:38 A.M. when Commander Francis R. Scobee, Pilot Michael J. Smith, Mission Specialist Judith A. Resnik, Mission Specialist Ellison S. Onizuka, Mission Specialist Ronald E. McNair, Payload Specialist Gregory B. Jarvis, and Payload Specialist and Concord, NH, high school teacher, Sharon Christa McAuliffe, all lifted off from a launch pad at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida for a specialized space mission on the **Challenger** space shuttle.
  
- A week ago, the shuttle **Columbia**, travelling at 12,000 mph, exploded 39 miles above the surface of the earth, and its debris fell over the state of Texas and other adjoining states.
  - It all happened about 9:00 A.M., EST.
  - Commander Rick Husband, Pilot William McCool, Payload Commander Michael Anderson, Mission Specialist Kalpana Chawla, Mission Specialist David Brown, Mission Specialist Laurel Clark, and Israeli Mission Specialist Ilan Ramon all died in this tragedy.

- **Today**, all seven of the Columbia astronauts are in eternity.
- None of the astronauts knew they were going to die.
- No one planned for what happened a week ago.
- Everyone knew that tragedy could strike at any time, but no one figured that February 1, 2003, would be the day.
- James 4:14 says, "**Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.**"
- These seven people leave behind a striking reminder of that truth!

⇒ **I. ONE MIGHT SAY**

⇒ **A. One might say that these people went to Heaven because of how they died.**

- o The truth is, no one goes to Heaven because of their mode of death.
- o The Bible never mentions that a person's death determines their eternal destination.
  - "Can you prove that, Preacher?"
  - If there were any verses in the Bible to show you, I'd show you, but there aren't.

- o Like the tract that someone published many years ago,

**"Everything In The Bible About Infant Baptism."**

- When you opened it, it was blank, BECAUSE there is nothing in the Bible about infant baptism.

⇒ **B. One might say that they went to Heaven because they died a hero's death.**

- o Dying does not make one a hero.
- o They may have died heroes, but dying a hero does not determine one's eternal destiny.
- Titus 3:5 says, **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."**
- o Certainly, dying for a good cause is admirable, but it does not get a person to Heaven!

⇒ **C. One might say, "Well, they just have to be in Heaven!**

- o **It just wouldn't be fair!"**
  - No one goes to Heaven on fairness.
  - God is not fair; He is just.
  - God does not operate like the ACLU!
    - He operates on His unchanging justness!

- **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** (1 John 1:7-9)

⇒ **II. SOME ETERNAL LESSONS FROM THE COLUMBIA DISASTER**

- **A. Life is short.** - "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14)
- **B. Life is uncertain.** - "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow." (James 4:14)
- **C. No one goes to Heaven because of the life that they lived.**
  - "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5)
- **D. No one goes to Heaven because of the death that they died.**
  - "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5)

- o **E. You only get to Heaven God's way.**
  - "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (**Matthew 7:13-14**)
  - "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (**John 10:7-9**)
  - "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (**John 14:6**)
  - "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (**Acts 4:12**)
  - Jesus is narrow enough to say, "**I am the way**" and wide enough to say "**Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved!**"
- o **F. You should decide today!**

- "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2

**Corinthians 6:2)**

- To delay may cost you Heaven!

⇒ **Conclusion:**

- o No one will ever forget what happened 17 years and 12 days ago on Tuesday, January 28, 1986, at 11:38 A.M. when the Challenger space shuttle exploded shortly after lift off.
- o I'm certain the events of a week ago Saturday, February 1, 2003, will be forever etched in our minds as well.
- o Death seems to be no respecter of persons.
- o Commander Rick Husband, Pilot William McCool, Payload Commander Michael Anderson, Mission Specialist Kalpana Chawla, Mission Specialist David Brown, Mission Specialist Laurel Clark, and Israeli Mission Specialist Ilan Ramon all died in this tragedy.
- o There is nothing a single human being can do to bring back the seven astronauts.
- o Death came to them just as death has come to countless millions of others throughout human history.

- o Kings and queens, princes and princesses, dukes and earls, monarchs and presidents, soldiers and astronauts, have all had to face death.
  - o Until the New Heaven and the New earth are come, men and women will have to face death just as these seven men and women had to face death.
- ⇒ If you were to die today, are you 100% sure that you would go to Heaven?
- o If not, would you be willing to receive Jesus as your Personal Saviour today?
    - "...now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation..."
  - o If you are a Christian, your life also is only a vapour. Are you living for Jesus as you ought to be living?