

Sudden Death!

by Wayne Goff

For most sports fans the phrase “**sudden death**” brings to mind the way in which we decide the winner of a sports contest between teams that are tied. Unfortunately this past Sunday it described the unexpected end of the life of basketball legend Kobe Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter Gianna, John and Keri Altobelli and daughter, Alyssa; Christina Mauser, pilot Ara Zobayan, and Sarah Chester and her daughter, Payton in a helicopter crash in Calabasas, California. The tragedy has literally shaken the entire country because it was so unexpected, and because so many young died together on their way to a basketball game. So much life, so much love, and so much talent — **gone in an instant**. It brings one to tears, sadness and grief. As wonderful as flying is, sometimes it causes great loss of life. Studying the lives of these people from the information provided on the internet just makes the tragedy even greater. The sorrow of the loved ones left behind cannot be described sufficiently in words. Our hearts and prayers go out to both those who died and their loved ones.

Preventable?

Perhaps much will be written in the future about how the helicopter crash could have been avoided. Flying in fog is always risky, but Kobe Bryant had a pilot in whom he had the utmost confidence. Mr. Zobayan was talented, knowledgeable, and able. The aircraft was often used for the same purpose, always without consequence. All of which shows that nothing in this world is **absolute**. There are no guarantees that things like this will never happen again. The sudden loss of life — experienced thousands of times around the world and in every age — never ceases to horrify us. The shock, grief, and sorrow will take some time before it comes to an end. Questions will never be fully answered. But it does point to one absolute — our lives are like “*a vapor*” (James 4:14). The words of James have never rung more true: “*Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.*”

It is hard to deal with man’s mortality. “*Our days on earth are as a shadow, and without hope*” (1 Chronicles 29:15). Job said, “*My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle,...*” (Job 7:6). “*Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and fades away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue*” (Job 14:1–2). “*Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth*” (Proverbs 27:1).

But in contrast to God, Who alone is **immortal**, we can only stand amazed: “*Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You; certainly every man at his best state is but vapor*” (Psalm 39:5).

The One Lesson

The one lesson that we should take from this is very simple. None of us has a “lease on life.” None of us is guaranteed another day on this earth. We are here by God’s design, grace and providence. It is our job to seek after God, find Him, and obey Him so that we **CAN** have eternal life when this earth life is over (Acts 17:26-27; Hebrews 5:8-9). When Jesus was asked about **the tragic deaths** of His day (Luke 13:1-5), He reminded us that they were not any different from the rest of us. The same fate could have befallen us! Yet Jesus warned those of us who are alive today: “*Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish*” (vv. 3, 5). Are you prepared for “sudden death”? You don’t the day when your earthly life is over! Prepare for sudden death **now!**

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