

PREPARATION

“Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.” (Amos 4:12)

On Monday Nov. 28, 2016 Lamia Flt # 2933 took off from Santa Cruz, Bolivia on a flight to Medellin, Columbia. It was a chartered flight in an Avro RJ85 with 77 people on board. The passengers included the Brazilian soccer team and also reporters. Unfortunately, the plane crashed 5 miles from their destination airport killing 71 people. While the experts and lawyers will debate the cause of the crash for the foreseeable future, it appears that the plane ran out of fuel.

Several facts point to this conclusion. First, the plane could only fly 1,600 nautical miles without refueling, and this was slightly under the distance between the two airports. John Cox of Florida-based Safety Operating Systems, said: "I don't understand how they could do the flight nonstop with the fuel requirements that the regulations stipulate." Second, just before the crash the pilot reported that he had a "total electrical failure" and was "out of fuel". Third, Ximena Sanchez, a Bolivian flight attendant who survived the crash, told rescuers the plane had run out of fuel moments before the crash. Fourth, there was no fire created by the crash.

If running out of fuel was the problem, it is easy to be critical. Even student pilots are charged with making adequate preparation for the safe completion of every flight. With regard to fuel, FAR 91.165 require for a flight like the one in question, to have enough fuel on board to fly to the first airport of intended landing with enough additional fuel to fly 45 minutes longer at normal cruising speed. In bad weather the regulations require even more fuel. Pilots have a saying that every plane that takes off will eventually come down. Coming down alive without destroying the aircraft, however, requires preparation.

But wait! Let's take a look in the mirror! We too are on a journey. This journey is called "life". It began when we struggled to take our first breath of air. It will end when we struggle to take our last breath of air. No matter how unpleasant this may be to you, you know it is true. It doesn't matter what you eat, how much you exercise, or who your doctor is. You are still going to die! The Bible puts it like this: **“. . . it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb 9:27 KJV)** You may forget this "appointment" but you will keep it just the same. Bible believers also accept the second unavoidable appointment we have at the "Judgement".

Now let us return to the pilot of Flt. # 2933. If he did run out of fuel it was his own fault. He was the "pilot in command" and should have been smart enough to make all preparations necessary for this rather routine flight. But what about you and me? Life also is rather "routine". Every day people are being born, and every day people are dying. How sad when people die unnecessarily only a short distance from their destination.

The devil is happy for you to prepare for virtually every event in life. He may even help you plan for a college and career. He may assist you in selecting a job and a mate. He is happy for you to have a wonderful place for retirement. He is not even bothered when you pay for your funeral in advance and buy a lot at the cemetery. The one thing he does not want you to do, however, is to prepare to meet God. As long as you do not prepare to meet God he has gained the victory. Yes! Put plenty of food and drinks on the plane. Yes! Make sure the PA system works and the in flight movies are ready to go. Yes! Make certain that the thermostat is set for maximum comfort. All of these comforts, however, are irrelevant if you die without reaching your destination.

There is an old joke about the man who jumped off the Empire State Building. He shouted as he went by the 35th floor: "Everything is all right so far"! "So far" everything is also right with you. If not you wouldn't be reading these words. Perhaps it is high time for you to wake up, fly right, and prepare to meet God!