

How Can People Die "Before Their Time"?

By James H. Hindes

The Coronavirus appears to be running wild in various parts of the world right now. Soon it may come your way. As a result, many people are giving a lot more thought to death, the how and when of its arrival. Is there a time for each of us? What can it mean when the young die? Can it be avoided by taking care so that accidents are less likely to happen?

There are those who say there are no accidents – it is all karma. Well, karma does preside over all that happens on earth. We know that everything we think, feel and do will have consequences, as B.B. King puts it, "a little further down the road." Those consequences may arrive in a future life when we have lost all memory of our original action. So, anything that happens could be an inevitable karmic result of past deeds. But freedom is also a part of our daily life. And we know that accidents do indeed happen. Maybe we have even seen them unfolding. Someone blinks, or daydreams and control is lost. Gravity, the great enforcer, is always ready when wakefulness is in short supply. Most human lives are visited by tragedy at some point. Then, too often, all that can be said is: it was an accident. Clearly, from our personal experience here on earth, it is simply false to say, "there are no accidents." We could, indeed, "pass away before our time." But does every human being have an "appointed time to die?"

Let's consider this question from a Biblical perspective. In Jesus Christ's farewell discourse to the disciples, he speaks of the time when "Heaven and earth will pass away..." (Mark 13:31). He is speaking of the death of the earth; or, if you will, a metamorphosis so majestic that the earth we experience today will be no more. What is the "appointed time" for this event? Jesus continues, "But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mark 13:33) So there *is* a definite time for the death of the earth, but only the Father God knows.

What is true for the earth altogether is true for those of us who live on it. Our time here is limited because the earth is only our school. Heaven is our real home. With so much to learn, we return to school, again and again, always to acquire new capacities and knowledge. Furthermore, we are here also to teach one another, ultimately, to learn to love. How much we can acquire in one lifetime will vary a great deal from person to person. When we have absorbed as much as we can, when our strength to help or teach others is exhausted, our time has come to go home, to die. Then we work with the angels transforming our newly acquired knowledge into increased abilities to learn and love during our next sojourn at school.

So, there is some kind of "appointed time" for our departure from our earthly existence, even if only the Father God knows. But this sounds a lot like "there are no accidents," a notion that contradicts everyday experience. We know that accidents do happen and that they sometimes lead to what is clearly an untimely death. How can this contradiction be resolved?

Actually, it is a contradiction only for a materialistic perspective that thinks of eternity as earthly time extended infinitely into the future. Eternity is better thought of as a spiritual 'place' existing outside time. Time, as we know it in our physical world, exists only here on earth. **The Father God** exists, lives, abides in eternity, outside time. To say that he 'knows' the time of someone's death does not mean that a time and date are entered in some celestial calendar that directly corresponds to earthly calendars. It means that he perceives it from eternity, and it 'instantaneously' becomes part of a much larger story. From the perspective of eternity, the moment something terrible happens, something that is obviously not in God's current 'learning plan' for someone, that event is taken up by the Father. He 'knows.' In that instant, with his hands, which are **the Holy Spirit's** nine hierarchies of angels, the Father reaches right down to our individual guardian angel, to conceive and work out another plan incorporating and transforming what is (was) a disaster here on earth. This wisdom of the Spirit at work in the hierarchies is sometimes called Holy Sophia. Any earthly disruption of human destinies immediately becomes a step on karmic paths that leads us forward to fulfill a greater plan, a more encompassing karma. Present and future earthly sojourns are transformed as such souls leave school perhaps early and then return again to earth at a rescheduled earthly date.

Then, it comes down to us here during our lifetimes to learn as much as we can, to love as much as we can, and to endure the blows of destiny that may come our way. But we have heavenly help even here. For it is **the Son God in Jesus Christ**, who brings **us** the divine power to become, to transform any earthly destiny, no matter how much death and how many accidents may befall us.