

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the explosion of the space ship Challenger. It happened on Jan. 28, 1986. The tragic flight lasted only 73 seconds and resulted in the death of seven astronauts. It was a disaster, however, which could have, and should have been avoided.

Bob Ebeling was one of five engineers who tried to stop the fatal flight. The temperature forecast for the launch was 18 degrees and these rocket engineers worried that the cold temperature would stiffen the rubber O-rings and allow burning rocket fuel to leak out of the booster joints. The morning of the launch Ebeling frantically beat his fists on the dashboard of his car and told his daughter "The Challenger is going to blow up. Everyone is going to die". Tragically, they didn't listen to him.

Roger Boisjoly, another aerospace engineer, also warned of the tragedy that would occur if the launch took place in cold weather. He argued for a delay but was over ruled. Boisjoly said in an interview with NPR's Daniel Zwerdling "We all knew if the seals failed the shuttle would blow up".

Allan McDonald detailed facts about the disaster in his book "*Truth, Lies, and O-rings: Inside the Space Shuttle Disaster*". He testified before a presidential commission that Morton Thickol had been so concerned about the O-rings that he recommended that the shuttle not be launched in temperatures below 53 degrees. McDonald was not only over ruled, but removed from his job and demoted. Fortunately, facts are stubborn things and McDonald was later vindicated and the O-ring problem was belatedly solved.

It is obvious that the Challenger disaster could have, and should have, been avoided! Imagine the frustration of these men who frantically sounded warnings that no one would believe.

There is, of course, a spiritual lesson to be learned from this. Jesus also sounded warnings which hardly anyone believed. Jesus came to earth with complete knowledge of what happens after we die, but only a few listened to him. Just think of it. In reality, your greatest adventure will start when you stop breathing. Jesus knew this and said: **"You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be you will indeed die in your sins"** (Jn. 8:23-24).

- As we have said, Jesus knew the truth but hardly anyone listened to him. **"He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came unto that which was his own, but his own did not receive him"** (Jn. 1:10-11).
- Jesus recognized his rejection and said: **"I am come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God"?** (Jn. 5:44)
- Jesus loved Jerusalem but Jerusalem did not love him. Jesus pleaded: **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing"** (Matt. 23:37). How sad that Jerusalem was destroyed when it didn't have to be.

- Remember! God loved the world and sent Jesus to save it! **“God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (Jn. 3:17).** Sadly, most in the world still reject the love of Jesus!
- As we have said, God loves the whole world and wants everyone to come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). So Jesus offers this gracious invitation to everyone. **“Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart. And you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).**
- SADLY MOST PEOPLE STILL REJECT THE LOVE OF GOD!
- THE TRAGEDY OF JUDGMENT DAY WILL MAKE THE CHALLENGER DISASTER PALE INTO INSIGNIFICANCE!

Bob Ebeling was the first to warn about the Challenger disaster. He died in 2016 in Brigham City, Utah at the age of 89 years and spent 30 years of his life blaming himself for the tragedy. He once confessed to a colleague, however, that the only way he could have saved those lives was to hold his bosses hostage with a gun. Finally, according to his daughter, Leslie Ebeling Serna, before Bob died he came to grips with reality. The Challenger disaster was not his fault. When the watchman sounds the warning he has done his part. The blood of those seven astronauts is not on Bob Ebeling’s hands.

Isaiah predicted that Jesus would be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Is. 53:3). Now we know one reason why! Jesus loved the world but the world did not love him!. Rejected love hurts deeply. Perhaps some of you have experienced the sadness of falling in love with someone who rejected your love. We intuitively erect a mental barrier to protect ourselves from strangers. When we fall in love, however, that barrier comes down and we become vulnerable to being wounded. Zechariah nailed it when he wrote: **“If someone asks him, ‘What are those wounds on your body?’ he will answer, ‘The wounds I was given at the house of my friends’” (Zech. 13:6).**

PLEASE LISTEN TO JESUS! DON’T MAKE HIM SUFFER ANYMORE FOR HE HAS ALREADY SUFFERED ENOUGH!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce