

# Man Killed by Armed Bird at Cockfight

. . . and other illustrations of the nearness of your death

By Daryl Wingerd

You've done it a time or two yourself—that is, you've planned, or at least speculated about, the details of your own death.

If you like fast cars, perhaps you'll die in a fiery crash. Or, because you're a bit overweight, you can easily imagine dying of complications from diabetes or heart disease. Because you smoke or chew tobacco, you wonder if cancer will get you. Soldiers often think about dying in combat, policemen at the hands of an armed criminal, and firefighters in a deadly blaze. And since we all spend time sleeping, most of us just hope to die peacefully while doing that.

The consistent theme seems to be that we have very limited imaginations concerning our own death, and we all tend to assume that our death will occur within a reasonable range of methods and times.



God thinks differently. He determines the time, and mode, of every death. As He says, "It is I who put to death . . . and there is no one who can deliver from My hand" (Deut. 32:39). And when God determines that it is time to "put to death," He is not at all limited in His creativity. As the psalmist says, "[God] has prepared for Himself deadly weapons" (Ps. 7:13).

God sent worms to eat Herod from the inside out (Acts 12:23). He instantly killed Aaron's sons with fire in the tabernacle (Lev. 10:1-2). Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their families, experienced "an entirely new thing" when the Lord split the earth open and swallowed them whole (Num. 16:29-33). Hundreds of Amorites were slaughtered by the Lord when He "threw large [hail]stones on them" (Josh. 10:11). The Lord ended the life of every single firstborn of the Egyptians in one night. The Bible doesn't tell us how they died, just that "the Lord struck [i.e., killed]" them (Ex. 12:29).

35-year-old Jose Luis Ochoa of Lamont, California, never imagined that his death would come at the hands (or feet) of a chicken armed with a knife. But

on February 7, 2011, while attending an illegal cockfight, one of the fighting chickens stabbed him in the leg with a knife that had been affixed to its foot. The blade, which was intended for the cruel purpose of maiming or killing the other combatant chicken, cut deep enough for Ochoa to bleed severely, and he was pronounced dead two hours later. "I've never seen this type of incident," said a 24 year veteran of the Kern County Sheriff's Department.

Apparently, God is still in the business of doing "entirely new things."

Think of the six people who were suddenly blasted into eternity when, without warning, two homes in Pennsylvania were completely obliterated by a natural gas explosion. Consider the young boy who was crushed by falling apples in a warehouse. Another man was killed while driving down the interstate when he ran over a metal rod left in the roadway. His front tire flipped the rod up so that it pierced the vehicle's floorboard and impaled him in the driver's seat, killing him instantly. None of these people planned to die when or how they did, and yet none of them could prevent, or even delay, their providential demise.

The point is, you are going to die, and because you don't know *how* it will happen, you cannot know *when* it will happen.

Are you ready to die? Are you ready to stand before the Lord in judgment? If you are not a follower of Christ, you are not ready, because apart from the redemption that is only found through faith in Him, your best deeds will condemn you. Furthermore, because as an unbeliever you are God's enemy, every moment you go on living is a moment borrowed from His mercy. Every breath you take is a breath you don't deserve, and He is easily able to make your next breath your last.

God is a righteous judge,  
And a God who has indignation every day.  
If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword;  
He has bent His bow and made it ready. (Ps. 7:11-12)

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