

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001



**ANOTHER DIED
IN MY PLACE**

On the afternoon of September 10, 2001, Steve Scheibner, an American Airlines pilot, did what he normally did before every flight: he checked the system for the next day's scheduled flights and the list of available pilots. Since Flight 11 had not been assigned yet and he was the only pilot available, he signed up to fly from Boston to Los Angeles, got his uniform ready, packed his bag, and waited for instructions from the airline.

That is the way most of us are. We make plans and prepare for the future, without considering that tomorrow might never come. The Bible warns us, *"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; 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"* (James 4.13-14 NKJV).

The phone call from American Airlines confirming Steve as the co-pilot assigned to Flight 11 never came. What Steve did not know was that an unusual last-minute pilot substitution had taken place. Thomas McGuinness, another American Airlines pilot, had called the

airline that afternoon requesting that very flight and had been confirmed due to his seniority.

Flight 11, co-piloted by Thomas, took off on schedule from Boston's Logan International Airport, but twenty minutes later it was hijacked by five terrorists, who killed the pilot and co-pilot to seize control of the aircraft. Half an hour later, the terrorists crashed the plane into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York. On that day, September 11, 2001, tragically 2,977 people lost their lives in four coordinated terrorist attacks, including the 92 people aboard American Airlines Flight 11.

The passengers and crew were unaware that, by boarding that flight, they were heading toward certain death. And although neither you nor I know when we will face death, we can be certain that the moment will come, for *"it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9.27 NKJV). Therefore, we must ask ourselves: When my life in this world ends, where will I go? What will my eternal destiny be?

News of the September 11th terrorist attacks spread rapidly, and shocking images circulated around the world.

That same afternoon, when Steve saw the image on television of the gaping hole left by the plane crashing into the North Tower, he thought: “That is the place where I should have died, but someone else died in my place...and this is not the first time.”

Steve was thinking about how Jesus Christ *“gave himself for us to set us free from every kind of lawlessness”* (Titus 2.14 NET). On the cross, Christ suffered the punishment we deserve for our sins, *“that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3.15 NKJV).

Several years earlier, Steve had come to believe that Christ died in his place. What about you?

Eleonor Mosquera

Cover:

Photo by Robert Clark (2001)

Still image of Steve Scheibner (Fox News, 2012)



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