

## **Sir Edmund Hillary Falls to Death**

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At age 33 on May 29, 1953, at 11:30 in the morning, Sir Edmund Hillary was the first man to step onto the summit of the tallest mountain in the world, Mount Everest, 29,028 feet. He was accompanied by a Nepalese Sherpa named Tenzing Norgay. Recalling the moment he wrote, "I then realized that the ridge ahead, instead of still monotonously rising, now dropped sharply away, and far below I could see the North Col and the Rongbuk Glacier. I looked upwards to see a narrow snow ridge running up to a snowy summit. A few more whacks of the ice-axe in the firm snow, and we stood on the top."

At age 88 on January 11, 2008, fifty-five years later, Sir Hillary fell to death as all others in the wide history of the world, with but two exceptions, had done. The words of the Bible once again ring true: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). The Bible speaks of death as an appointment that must be met in Hebrews 9:27: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." The pinnacle of physical accomplishments in this life washes out against the background of eternity.

Many great men in vain will flee for refuge to the mountains when the Lord renders his judgment on the world as is depicted in Revelation 6:13-17: "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

What analogous Mt. Everest have you conquered? Has the educational level or degree you sought now been gained? Has the steady, even good, paying job or position you wanted been yours now for years? Has the house you have made a home served as a refuge of safety from the world, a kind of comfortable castle where daily cares and concerns are swept away by a sweet spouse and supportive children? Was there a challenging goal met that brought rightful pride of attainment like employee of the month, salesman of the year, or perhaps it was a community service award of some kind? Were it not for the dust sports trophies and plaques might not be in a box in the attic. A good retirement for many signifies a life of reward following an arduous career. Again, we observe the pinnacle of

physical accomplishments in this life washes out against the background of eternity. From God James wrote, “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jas. 4:14).

The width and depth and height of eternity is the canvas upon which we paint the picture of our lives. We cannot choose the colors or the texture, but the brush is in our hands. The ridge of life is still monotonously rising and soon will drop sharply away. The Lord has promised the humble Christian he will lead and guide: “Thou

***“It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves”—Sir Edmund Hillary  
(1919-2008).***

shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Psa. 73:24).  
“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (I Cor. 10:12).