

## Fragile and Frail

### Commentary for September 16, 2018 — the Fragility of Things, the Frailty of People

Some days ago I was notified by Ramona Martin that the ASK website was not working. My experience at first was that links to articles and commentaries would not work, and then others and I received “page not found” error messages. Later the ASK homepage stopped working for any web browser such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Microsoft Edge.

The problem was not with our equipment or software; it was with the server maintained by our web hosting company. It turned out that the company that housed the server for [www.askelm.com](http://www.askelm.com) loaded authorized upgrades to their server software. It crashed their system and websites like ASK that they maintained.

When the problem was fixed and everything was back online later the next day, it brought to mind how fragile the web presence and operation of the ASK website truly is. The website is massive considering how small ASK is, but we were suddenly stopped from getting information to the world because of a line (or many lines) of code in a program interrupting the signals from allowing the servers to work correctly.

Before the website was back online I was upset but not particularly worried because our web host company regularly backs up our entire website (where the servers are located and at a location away from the servers). In addition, I have backed up of all relevant information on my computer, and even that is saved off my computer at a different location from where I work. Not much more can be done to prepare for the worst-case scenario.

Even so, I felt vulnerable and upset with the potential of having to do what would be necessary to put back everything that would be lost. (Think of Humpty Dumpty.) I forgot how much of my life is necessarily involved with the ASK website, how most of Dr. Ernest Martin’s research and work is contained there, my own work, Ramona Martin’s work, our webmaster, and even our wonderful volunteers — all have an emotional investment in the ASK website, as do most of you reading this Commentary.

Great and powerful nations come and go (Daniel 2:21, 4:17, 25, 32, 35, 5:21; Jeremiah 27:5; Acts 17:26), so too great companies and industries come and go.<sup>1</sup> Small enterprises like ASK also go through a process of birth, lifespan, and death.

### **Mankind’s Frailty**

Yet ASK is not a creature like men or women. Each of us is an individual creation of God,

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<sup>1</sup> The Dow Jones Industrial index is composed of the stock prices of the 30 greatest industrial companies in the United States. General Electric was the last of the original Dow companies when the Dow expanded to 30 stocks in 1907, according to the *New York Times* article, [“G.E. Dropped From the Dow After More Than a Century.”](#)

**“fearfully and wonderfully made”** (Psalm 139:14), in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26–27. 5:1, 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9). Each of us alive at this moment must understand what James wrote:

**“... you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. For that you ought to say, ‘If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.’”**

• *James 4:14–15*

Our life is **“a vapor.”** How much less are the physical works we do and the possessions we have? In our modern age we try to separate ourselves from the frailty of life by the “things” we possess and only temporarily own, **“YHWH, make me to know my end, and the measure [number] of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am”** (Psalm 39:4).

King David wrote Psalm 39 and felt comfortable to ask God for the knowledge regarding the end of his days. Certainly, we as His children can do the same. Can we do the same? We certainly could, but the answers to all our questions regarding when we will die have been answered for most of us through the words of Christ and His apostles. Through the Scriptures, we know much more than David did about what occurs after death, especially for us believers and our future glory.<sup>2</sup> Every breath and every one of your heartbeats is a continuing gift from God (**“Your Resurrection”**).

King David was informed by Job’s knowledge expressed during his suffering:

**“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down: he flees also as a shadow, and continues not.**

**... Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with you, you have appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.**

**... If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. You [God] shall call, and I will answer you: you will have a desire to the work of your hands. For now you numbered my steps.”**

• *Job 14:1–2, 5, 14–16*<sup>3</sup>

Not only do we have knowledge David did not have, David never had the intimate connection to our Father in heaven that we have at this moment through Christ. We are connected to them both through God’s own Holy Spirit. We may be fragile and frail, but each of us has an unbelievable future as God’s children. You and all your loved ones will be there also.

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<sup>2</sup> Moses’ death was pronounced by God (Deuteronomy 31:14–16, 34: 5–7). King David was given a reprieve from a death sentence from God (**“King David’s Near Death Experience”**) and so was King Hezekiah of Judah (2 Kings 20:1–11). You have no reason to receive a reprieve from death. For us, like the apostle Paul, **“to live is Christ, and to die is gain”** (Philippians 1:21) and trust that God will do what is best for us according to His will.

<sup>3</sup> In these passages Job says some very interesting things about a human being’s life and ever approaching death that should be read in a modern translation in addition to the King James Version.