



Slipped through

John 8:59, *Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*

21 December 1988, Jaswant Basuta checked in for **Pan Am flight 103 to New York** in plenty of time.

"After all," he thought, "you can't be too careful - what with the Christmas rush and everything."

Tomorrow was an important day. The next morning, the 47-year-old car mechanic was due to start a new job and his wife, Surinder, was coming to the airport to collect him.

He had come to the UK to attend a family wedding in Belfast, but now he was looking forward to going home.

Some relatives from nearby Southall had come to see him off at the terminal and they decided to take Jaswant for a drink in the bar upstairs.

Finally, when he came to realise that time had gone by, "Pan Am 103, New York, Gate Closing," was flashing on the departure screen.

He made it quickly through passport control and security and thundered down the travelator, only to arrive at the gate to see the room empty except for the Pan Am ground crew breezily tidying up at the desk.

Voices were raised on both sides, but it was no good. Through the window he could see the 747 jumbo jet gently push back from the gate and slowly taxi away under the sodium lights towards the end of the runway. It was just after six o'clock.

For although Jaswant was not aware of it, 38 minutes after take-off, Pan Am flight 103 had blown up over the Scottish borders town of Lockerbie killing all 259 passengers and crew on board and 11 people on the ground.

It proved to be a turning point of his life.

"Why me? Why was I saved? I should have been the 271st victim and I still feel terrible for all the other people who died."

When the **West Side Baptist Church in Beatrice, Nebraska**, was demolished by an explosion on **Wednesday, March 1, 1950**, fifteen people were supposed to be there. But miraculously the church was empty, and no one was injured.

Choir practice at the church always began punctually at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday evenings. Choir members were usually prompt and ready to sing by 7:25 p.m. But at 7:25 p.m., when the explosion occurred, nobody was there.

The blast collapsed the church, caused power outages which forced a nearby radio station off the air, shattered windows in surrounding homes and could be heard around the town.

Miraculously not one of the people who should have been present had yet arrived when the building collapsed. Every one of the choir's fifteen members escaped for different apparent reasons, all were late for practice that night.

The minister, **Reverend Walter Klempel**, his wife, and his daughter, Marilyn Ruth, were all set to leave on time. They were almost out the door when Marilyn Ruth noticed her dress had a stain. Her mother took out another dress and started ironing it.

When the church exploded, they were still at home.

The pianist, **Marilyn Paul**, was planning to be at the church 30 minutes early. But she took a nap after dinner and overslept. Her mother, the choir director, who also wanted to be there early tried to wake up Marilyn several times.

Finally, she shook her awake at 7:15 PM. Marilyn was still struggling to get ready, with her mother waiting so they leave together, when they heard the blast.

Two high-school girls, **Lucille Jones and Dorothy Wood**, would always go together.

On that evening, Lucille was transfixed by a radio program. The girls were usually prompt, but Lucille uncharacteristically wanted to stay until 7:30 PM so she can finish the program. Dorothy waited for her.

Two sisters, **Royena and Sadie Estes**, left early but their car would not start. They called a friend, **Ladona Vandergrift**, who was usually early for practice and asked her to give them a ride.

But Ladona was a high-school sophomore who happened to be held behind by homework that night. She was dealing with a very complicated geometry problem and wanted to finish it before leaving.

Both she and the Estes sisters were late.

A lathe operator, **Herbert Kipf**, was running ahead of time. But then he was pulled back by the thought of an unfinished important letter. He sat down to finish it.

He was still on his desk when the church exploded.

Mrs. Schuster left early with her small daughter, **Susan**. But before going to church she had one stop.

Her mother was due to leave to a missionary meeting and needed help. Mrs. Schuster and little Susan went to help and were delayed.

Stenographer Joyce Black, who lived across the street from the church, was feeling “just plain lazy.” The evening was very cold, and she was all huddled up in her warm house. She did not feel like going out and stayed until the last possible moment.

The Blast

At 7:25 PM the empty church exploded. Later, firemen would theorize that a gas leak caused it. The blast was heard in the entire town of Beatrice. It shattered the windows of buildings and disconnected the radio station.

The West Side Baptist Church shattered to smithereens. The roof collapsed and the walls exploded outwards in an explosion that would have killed anyone inside. But not a single person was there.

So why you?

Why are you alive?

Many have perished!

What are we asking these days, why did that happen to someone else?

John 8:59, *Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*

Jesus has not only called His critics liars and children of the devil.

John 8:44, *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

He has directly claimed the same name as God.

John 8:58, *Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”*

If this is not true, it is blasphemy—the fact that these men so immediately picked up stones proves their opinion of which option applied.

John 10:33, *The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."*

Scripture makes it clear that Jesus acts according to God the Father's schedule.

John 7:6–8, *Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. ⁷ The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. ⁸ You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come."*

And, at the same time, the Bible shows that God ensures that everything around Jesus complies with this timetable.

This verse is another example of Jesus' enemies unsuccessfully attempting to arrest, detain, or kill Him.

John 7:45–46, *Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" ⁴⁶ The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"*

Most of these "escape" occurrences are vague and are probably best interpreted in natural terms.

Most likely, Jesus simply left or exited in such a way that His attackers failed to reach Him.

In other cases, such as when He will be surrounded on a high ledge near the Temple, there is a greater chance that His escape was enabled by supernatural means.

John 10:23–24, *And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. ²⁴ Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."*

John 10:39, *Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.*

In any event, Jesus has made His views on their hypocrisy and spiritual state very clear, and they have once again failed to silence Him.

John 5:18, *Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.*

John 7:1, *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.*

Of course, Jesus could do this because He was God as He claimed, but even more important, and applicable to us!

Jesus did it because God's plan had not yet been fulfilled and they were NOT going to interrupt God's plan.

Same for us today. Do not fear what God has you do.

You will be safe in God's arms NO MATTER WHAT THE THREAT OR DANGER until God's plans for your life are fulfilled and He decides to call you home.

Yes, you might face an unpleasant death for His sake someday, but your life will be preserved until the SECOND that God's will for your life is complete.

I believe this so firmly that I am quite sure this type of event can and does still occur today, especially out on the front lines of the mission's work and in countries where Christians are horribly persecuted.

Did you know that hundreds of thousands of Christians are imprisoned, beaten, robbed and killed every year simply for their faith in Christ?

John chapter 8 is the chapter of confrontational.

John 8:1-12 Women caught on the adultery.

John 8:13-20 Witness of the Father.

John 8:20, *These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.*

John 8:21-36 Jesus and truth

John 8:37-47 Abraham seed or Satan's?

John 8:48-59 Jesus declares that He is God.

Where did they get the stones?

The whole event takes place in the temple.

John 7 and 8 Feast of the Tabernacles.

The people have come to worship the Lord.

But they also brought some stones with them.

John 8:1-12

Judges 6:13-14,

God did not directly answer to Gideon.