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The apostle Paul, describing his NDE in 60 AD, II Cor. 12:2-4 KJV

APPENDIX 2

LIFE AFTER DEATH EXPERIENCES THAT PEOPLE HAVE LIVED TO TELL ABOUT

Many people, who were clearly dead, with no heartbeat or brain activity for a number of minutes, have reported startling accounts of seeing Jesus or experiencing unbelievable Hell.¹

We suggest that for a fuller explanation of this subject, near death experiences (NDE), which should be more correctly called temporary death experiences, you read the book, *Beyond Death's Door*, by Maurice S. Rawlings, M.D. This book is based on his research of several cases, drawn from the first hand testimonies of people who died, were revived and who later recalled very remarkable and similar experiences.

In a 1991 *Reader's Digest* article entitled “Children of the Light,” by Melvin Morse, M.D., the author noted: “A 1982 Gallup Poll found that an estimated eight million people have had an NDE.”²

THREE DEAD GIVE THEIR TESTIMONY

Some quotes from Dr. Raymond A. Moody's book, *Life After Life*, include: “I was in a very dark, very deep valley. Later I thought, ‘Well, now I know what the Bible means by *the valley of the shadow of death* because I've been there.’”

‘After I came back, I cried off and on for about a week because I had to live in this world after seeing that one.’

¹Concerning an experience which sounds like Hell to us, Dr. Moody documents an interview with a man who said: “...I seen a lot of people down there, screaming, howling....almost a million....They were miserable and hateful. They were asking me for water.” Moody further reports that a young man who attempted to commit suicide and had a cardiac arrest, experienced: “...images of some horrific beings clutching and clawing at him. It was something like descending into Dante's inferno. He had a claustrophobic, hostile, nightmarish NDE, without the slightest positive experience....no being of light, nothing beautiful, nothing pleasant.” Raymond A. Moody, Jr., M.D., *The Light Beyond*. New York: Bantam Books, © 1988, pp. 26-27, 151, used by permission.

²Melvin Morse, M.D., “Children of the Light,” *Reader's Digest*, Mar., 1991, p. 84. Condensed version of the book *Closer to the Light*, by Melvin Morse, M.D.

‘I heard a voice telling me what I had to do—go back—and I felt no fear.’”³

DR. ROSS CORROBORATES THE RESEARCH

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, M.D., wrote, in the foreword to Moody’s book: “...it is evident from his findings that the dying patient continues to have a conscious awareness of his environment after being pronounced clinically dead. This very much coincides with my own research, which has used the accounts of patients who have died and made a comeback, totally against our expectations and often to the surprise of some highly sophisticated, well-known and certainly accomplished physicians. All of these patients have experienced a floating out of their physical bodies....It is also corroborated by my own research and by the findings of other very serious-minded scientists...who have had the courage to investigate in this new field of research in the hope of helping those who need to know, rather than to believe.”⁴

DR. MOODY’S “BEING OF LIGHT”

Dr. Moody said that many of the people he interviewed claimed to have seen a “being of light,” which they felt was Jesus. This “being” radiated love and warmth. In Dr. Moody’s words: “What is perhaps the most incredible common element in the accounts I have studied, and is certainly the element which has the most profound effect upon the individual, is the encounter with a very bright light. Typically, at its first appearance this light is dim, but it rapidly gets brighter until it reaches an unearthly brilliance. Yet, even though this light (usually said to be white or ‘clear’) is of an indescribable brilliance, many make the specific point that it does not in any way hurt their eyes, or dazzle them, or keep them from seeing other things around them (perhaps because at this point they don’t have physical ‘eyes’ to be dazzled).

³Raymond A. Moody, Jr., M.D., *Life After Life*. New York: Bantam Books, © 1975, p. cover flap, used by permission

⁴Ibid, p. foreword.

Despite the light's unusual manifestation, however, not one person has expressed any doubt whatsoever that it was a being,^[5] a being of light. Not only that, it is a personal being. It has a very definite personality. The love and the warmth which emanate from this being to the dying person are utterly beyond words, and he feels completely surrounded by it and taken up in it, completely at ease and accepted in the presence of this being. He senses an irresistible magnetic attraction to this light. He is ineluctably drawn to it."⁶

Dr. Moody, at the time of his third book, *The Light Beyond*, has interviewed over one thousand people who claim to have survived bodily death. This refers to medically proven cases in which there was no heartbeat for a number of minutes prior to resuscitation.

THREE, HAVING DIED, DESCRIBED THE LIGHT—ONE SAID IT WAS JESUS

The following are three personal testimonies regarding this "being of light," recorded by Dr. Moody: "I heard the doctors say that I was dead, and that's when I began to feel as though I were tumbling, actually kind of floating, through this blackness....I could see this light. It was a very, very, brilliant light, but not too large at first. It grew larger as I came nearer and nearer to it. I was trying to get to that light at the end, because I felt that it was Christ....being a Christian....I said to myself, 'If this is it, if I am to die, then I know who waits for me at the end, there in that light.'"⁷

Another person who witnessed this light, described it as a: "...pure crystal clear light, an illuminating white light. It was beautiful and so bright, so radiant, but it didn't hurt my eyes. It's not any kind of light you can describe on earth. I didn't actually see a person in this light, and yet it has a special identity, it definitely does. It is a light of perfect understanding and perfect love. The thought came to my mind, 'Lovest thou me?'" This was not exactly in the form of a question, but I guess the connotation of what the light said was, 'If you do love me, go back and complete what you began in your life.' And all during this time, I felt as though I were surrounded by an overwhelming love and compassion."⁸

⁵Some have correctly pointed out that Satan can masquerade as an angel of light; thus, this author would have no doubt that this manifestation was not Jesus, if the person who saw him had not received Jesus as their Messiah-atonement. However, a Christian's testimony of this beauty leaves little doubt in our minds that, at least in these cases, this may very well be Jesus. Remember what Paul wrote: "We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8 KJV).

⁶Raymond A. Moody, Jr., M.D., *Life After Life*, p. 58.

⁷Ibid, p. 62.

⁸Ibid, p. 63.

Still another person testified: “I knew I was dying and that there was nothing I could do about it, because no one could hear me....I was out of my body, there’s no doubt about it, because I could see my own body there on the operating room table. My soul was out! All this made me feel very bad at first, but then, this really bright light came. It did seem that it was a little dim at first, but then it was this huge beam....And it gave off heat to me; I felt a warm sensation.

It was a bright yellowish white—more white. It was tremendously bright; I just can’t describe it. It seemed that it covered everything, yet it didn’t prevent me from seeing everything around me—the operating room, the doctors and nurses, everything. I could see clearly, and it wasn’t blinding....it asked, it kind of asked me if I was ready to die. It was like talking to a person....the voice that was talking to me actually realized that I wasn’t ready to die. You know, it was just kind of testing me more than anything else. Yet, from the moment the light spoke to me, I felt really good—secure and loved. The love which came from it is just unimaginable, indescribable. It was a fun person to be with! And it had a sense of humor, too—definitely!”⁹

THE IDENTITY OF THE LIGHT, AS DEFINED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL’S EXPERIENCE

A New Testament clue to the identity of this light may be in the book of Acts 9:1-9 and 26:13-32, where Paul gives a testimony of his conversion. Before Paul accepted Jesus as Messiah, he was a renegade rabbi responsible for the deaths of many of the early Jewish believers in Jesus (Acts 26:9-10). In his description of seeing Jesus after His resurrection and ascension to the heavens, Paul said: “At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining around about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose....Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision....I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ

⁹Ibid, pp. 63-64.

should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles....King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:13-19, 22-23, 27-28 KJV).¹⁰

The only difference in Paul’s encounter was that his human, mortal eyes (he was still alive) were burdened by the light (Acts 9:9). This light identified Himself as **Jesus**, whom Paul had been persecuting.

The passage mentions that Jesus spoke in the Hebrew tongue. It is interesting to note that Jesus’ Hebrew name, *Yeshua* (ישוע, in Hebrew), lights the Jewish candelabra called the menorah (lamp) described in Exodus 25:31-35, which has seven lamp stands. For interesting details about Jesus’ name in Hebrew, see our section in chapter 9, “The Messiah Conpiracy Concludes,” entitled “The Equation of the Ages.” No doubt, these facts take on new meaning.



A woodcut (made in 1515) of Rabbi Saul’s conversion to faith in Messiah, as he is knocked from his horse while witnessing a light from Heaven brighter than the sun.

¹⁰These events were recorded by the apostle Luke.



In Hebrew, the shape of the four Hebrew letters spelling Jesus (*Yeshua*, יֵשׁוּעַ) light God's candelabra, the Jewish menorah!

REXELLA VAN IMPE'S NDE

Rexella Van Impe, the wife of Dr. Jack Van Impe, the famous Bible scholar and television evangelist, was injured in a car accident in Brussels in 1982. She found herself outside of her body watching her husband crying as he held her in his arms. This was reported in their video, *Heaven, an Out-of-Body Adventure, Who, Why, When?*¹¹

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE WITH JESUS IN THIRD HEAVEN

The apostle Paul describes his Heaven experience, when he was stoned to death at Lystra, in the year 46 AD. This is recorded in the book of Acts: "And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead' " (Acts 14:19 KJV).

After Paul was dragged to a garbage heap outside the city, he was resurrected: "Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up" (Acts 14:20 KJV).

Fourteen years later, in 60 AD, when Paul penned II Corinthians, he tells us: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (II Cor. 12:2-4 KJV).

Paul reminds us of our home in Heaven when he relates: "...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9 KJV).

JESUS AND HIS APOSTLE JOHN DESCRIBE THE BEAUTY THAT IS IN STORE FOR US

Jesus said: "In my father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2 KJV).

¹¹ This videotape, produced in 1992, is available through JVI Ministries, POB 7004, Troy, MI, USA 48007.

In the last book of the New Testament, the apostle John, through a prophetic vision of the future shown to him by God, tells us, where we, as believers, will all end up: “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2 KJV).

We can all imagine how wonderful it will be when Jesus returns to stop Armageddon, resurrecting all the dead bodies of the Tribulation believers. What a beautiful sight we will see in our new eternal bodies—His divinity—which peered out only a little at His transfiguration, which was, in itself, a preview of His Second Coming.

Jesus’ disciple, Matthew, recorded this dazzling event, which startled all who saw it nearly 2000 years ago: “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the **light**. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias^[12] talking with him: While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid” (Matt. 17:1-3, 5-6 KJV; bold mine).

FOR THE UNBELIEVER, THERE IS NO BEAUTY, ONLY MISERY

Regarding some of the unpleasant experiences, Moody documents: “A man who was despondent about the death of his wife shot himself, ‘died’ as a result, and was resuscitated. He states: ‘I didn’t go where [my wife] was. I went to an awful place....I immediately saw the mistake I had made....I thought, ‘I wish I hadn’t done it.’ ’ ”¹³

Dr. Moody emphasizes that many: “...say that although they had read religious writings, such as *The Bible*, they had never really understood certain things they had read there until their near-death experiences.”¹⁴

¹²This is Elijah of the Old Testament.

¹³Raymond A. Moody, Jr., M.D., *Life After Life*, p. 143.

¹⁴*Ibid*, p. 141.

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES TODAY?

As to why there has been such an explosion of near-death experiences in our time, the doctor explains: "...it has only been in fairly recent times that advanced resuscitation technology has been available. Many of the people who have been brought back in our era would not have survived in earlier years. Injections of adrenaline into the heart, a machine which delivers a shock to the heart, and artificial heart and lung machines are examples of such medical advances."¹⁵

HAVE THESE EXPERIENCES BEEN CORROBORATED?

Dr. Moody addressed the issue of NDE corroboration and the bewilderment of the doctor in one of these cases. The patient told Moody: "After it was all over the doctor told me that I had a really bad time, and I said, 'Yeah, I know.' He said, 'Well, how do you know?' and I said, 'I can tell you everything that happened.' He didn't believe me, so I told him the whole story, from the time I stopped breathing until the time I was kind of coming around. He was really shocked to know that I knew everything that had happened. He didn't know quite what to say, but he came in several times to ask me different things about it."¹⁶

Moody also mentioned an old woman who had been blind since she was a young girl, long before the advent of the modern shock paddle defibrillator used for cardiac resuscitation. After her successful resuscitation, she described, in detail, the exact configuration of the equipment used to save her life.

Other patients reported seeing accidents and unusual events which took place outside the hospital just prior to their resuscitation—while they were dead!

MORE CORROBORATION—CASES OF THE BLIND LEADING THE SIGHTED—HEARING IS BELIEVING!

Cardiac surgeon Maurice Rawlings reminds us regarding this unexplainable evidence of: "...how blind individuals with NDEs report visual reconstructions of clothing colors, types of jewelry, and other visual details occurring in the room; how victims visualize events and people located in other rooms and how they see loved ones

¹⁵Ibid, p. 145.

¹⁶Ibid, p. 99.

in another world, with no prior knowledge of their deaths.”¹⁷ If an NDE were nearly a dream, as some claim, the above would not be possible.

THE CORROBORATION OF CHILDREN, DESCRIBING DETAILS WHILE OUTSIDE OF THEIR BODIES

Gary R. Habermas and J. P. Moreland, in their work, *Immortality, The Other Side of Death*, document two cases. The first case, a young girl named Katie, nearly drowned in a pool. After being resuscitated in the emergency room, a CAT scan showed she had massive brain swelling. She was attached to an artificial lung to keep her breathing. She had a ten percent chance of survival. Three days later, she completely recovered and told a remarkable story. Though she had been “profoundly comatose,” with her eyes closed throughout her entire treatment, she gave exact details regarding the physical features of her doctors, the hospital rooms in which she had been treated, and the medical procedures her doctors employed to save her. Amazingly, she was also able to describe, in minute detail, what her family was doing at home, awaiting news of her status, while she lie in the hospital! Then, Katie said she met “Jesus and the heavenly Father.”¹⁸

Another case from Habermas and Moreland involves five-year-old Rick, who suffered from meningitis. As Rick was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance, he decided to “stay behind.” He later reported seeing his father crying in the car while he drove the family to the hospital. Rick then rushed to the hospital, “arriving” before the ambulance. He saw hospital orderlies move a young girl out of the room he would occupy. Rick’s memories were corroborated by his family, and were particularly amazing due to the fact that he was

¹⁷ Maurice S. Rawlings, M.D., *To Hell and Back*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, © 1993, p. 94, used by permission.

¹⁸ Gary R. Habermas and J.P. Moreland, *Immortality, The Other Side of Death*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, © 1992, pp. 74-75. This book is very accurate and written by two highly qualified Christians. We highly recommend it. The authors’ impressive credentials read as follows: “*Gary R. Habermas* is the Chairman of the Department of Philosophy and Theology and professor of apologetics and philosophy at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia. He has written numerous books on life-after-death issues...published numerous scholarly and popular articles...He received a B.R.E. from William Tyndale College, a M.A. in religious studies from the University of Detroit, and a Ph.D. in history and philosophy of religion from Michigan State University...*J. P. Moreland* is professor of philosophy of religion at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, La Mirada, California, and serves as director of Talbot’s M.A. program in philosophy and ethics...He has earned four academic degrees: a B.S. in chemistry from the University of Missouri, a Th.M. in theology from Dallas Theological Seminary, a M.A. in philosophy from the University of California at Riverside, and a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Southern California.” *Ibid.*, p. “About the Authors.”

comatose before he was taken in the ambulance and for several days afterward.

HOW REAL IS HELL? AS REAL AS DEATH!

Appearing on *The 700 Club* at the end of 1993, Dr. Rawlings related that while resuscitating some patients with shock paddles, they would say to him, “Don’t stop Doctor, you’re getting me out of Hell!” Dr. Rawlings has written two excellent books on the subject of near death experiences from a Christian perspective. They are *Beyond Death’s Door* and *To Hell and Back*.

In our opinion, Dr. Rawlings is more qualified¹⁹ to write on this subject because, unlike Dr. Moody (a psychiatrist), he is a surgeon who has had first hand experience with patients on the operating table.²⁰

Dr. Rawlings’ books are highly recommended, considered much more accurate, and also provide us with a more biblical perspective on the experience of the patients. These patients remember their Hell experiences more vividly than those interviewed by other doctors, days or weeks after the event.

Dr. Rawlings reports that the Hell experience is more easily and quickly forgotten than seeing Jesus, which accounts for the low percentage of hellish NDE’s in the other research. The subconscious, in time, is much more apt to suppress a negative experience than a positive one. Rawlings testifies: “I was resuscitating a terrified patient who told me he was actually in hell. He begged me to get him out of hell and not to let him die. When I fully realized how genuinely

¹⁹Dr. Rawlings’ credentials and unique qualifications read as follows: “Dr. Maurice Rawlings, specialist in cardiovascular diseases at the Diagnostic Center and the area hospitals of Chattanooga, graduated with honors from the George Washington University Medical School. He served in both the Army and the Navy and became chief of cardiology at the 97th General Hospital in Frankfurt, Germany. He then was promoted to personal physician at the Pentagon for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which included Generals Marshall, Bradley, Patton, and Dwight Eisenhower before he became president of the United States. In civilian life Dr. Rawlings was appointed to the National Teaching Faculty of the American Heart Association, specializing in teaching methods for the retrieval of patients from sudden death. He taught at various medical schools and hospitals and conducted courses for doctors and nurses in many countries. Dr. Rawlings is clinical assistant professor of medicine for the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, a member of the International Committee on Cardiovascular Diseases, a past governor for the American College of Cardiology for the state of Tennessee, founder of the area’s Regional Emergency Medical Services Council, faculty instructor for the Advanced Cardiac Life Support programs, and Fellow of the American College of Physicians, the College of Cardiology, and the College of Chest Physicians. In addition, he has authored three previous books and written several articles on heart disease for national medical journals.” Maurice S. Rawlings, M.D., *To Hell and Back*, p. “About the Author.”

²⁰Dr. Rawlings and I do not endorse any claims by Dr. Moody, which venture outside the Christian perspective.

and extremely frightened he was, I too became frightened....Now I feel assured that there is life after death, and not all of it good'....Public interest in these questions continues to grow as more people survive the death experience through modern restorative techniques called *resuscitation*....As a cardiologist exposed to critically ill patients in the coronary care units of several hospitals, I have had many opportunities to resuscitate people who have clinically died. I have found that an interview immediately after patients are revived reveals as many bad experiences as good ones."²¹

²¹Maurice S. Rawlings, M.D., *Beyond Death's Door*. New York: Bantam Books, © 1978, pp. foreword and introduction, used by permission.