

**A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific
Research of The Near-Death-Experience**

By

3/16/2012

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**A Dissertation Presentation for the Doctorial Facility of
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PhD, CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS
For Graduation**

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

Introduction

I had an experience, in which there has been and continues to a battle of be major research, arguments and experimentations, some ranging some of the highest upper echelons of education intellectual halls such as Harvard University and Cambridge University to the international world based website such as the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS), all of whom are seeking the revelation, truth and proof behind this phenomenon that has me to be know as a Near -Death Episode (NDE).

My personal experience involving A NDE is only one inclusive there are number, scientific hypothesizes and various individual NDE story are documentation that is consistent from my own personal NDE experience.

My research incorporates the apologetical world-view of the Christian's relationship with the Father, and the Son, Jesus the Christ. You will find the use of many Scriptural references concerning the journey of NDE, and how it relates to the concept of a promised eternity with the Lord, for those that are believers. I will research the physical scientific proof of if this phenomenon is an actually unexplainable regardless of scientific testing; the result of a brain starved of oxygen (hypoxia); or the result of chemical induced product or malfunction of the brain.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

Background

Twenty-five years ago, I had a NDE occurrence; it was an experience that changed my life, perceptions, spiritually and emotional world-view. It was an experience that I have never forgotten, not one single detail of and one that I have pondered often in my mind besieged by many questions, uncertainty and a drawing of my final resolutions.

My personal NDE has haunted me for over 25-30-years, and yet, regardless of the time span it is just as it happened yesterday in my mind of recollection. it is with through this dissertation, which is my attempt to address the questions that I had about my personal NDE experiences, that as a Christian I have found in conclusion, and look into the phenomena of NDR from a Christian world- view, which I believe is apologetically correct.

Significance of the study

The significance of the study is to answer questions internally form myself and form an apologetic Christian world- view concerning NDS. I will address what are commonalities of the phenomena from other accounts male and female who have experienced Near Death Experiences.

NDE's can be used as a valuable Apologetic tool. These experiences represent and are enlightened fulfillments of the promises of God, as far as eternity and the uniting with familiar individuals that have passed on in a person's life in eternity. NDE's

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are powerful testimonies of personal spiritual encounters and a bolstering of faith, in the Christian religion.

NDE's and their commonality of occurrences have been studied for almost 100 years and there is great scientific and medical research by leading clinicians that have begun to recognize the reality, scientific and religious significant of these occurrence's, for they produce both significant spiritual and physical ramifications to the person with the NDE, as well as those directly involved with the person and the results of the NDE. It is another spiritual proven apologetic point that God is real and the afterlife is a reality, whether eternity or hell.

Research Methodology

- I will explore the biblical aspect of eternity and Christian spiritual belief, and the correction of our belief faith belief and the correlation of Christians and other religions that have experienced or had a NDE.
- I will explore and examine the transformation commonalities physically, emotionally and spiritually of those that have experienced Near Death Experiences
- What are the life spiritual, emotional and physical results /or repercussions of those who have experienced NDS?
- I will present medical data and argumentative explanation of Cognitive Neuroscience of an oxygen deprived brain and its medical assumed correlation to Near Death Experiences.

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- I will present research and explore what is the scientific data that is supportive of the reality of Near Death Experiences?
- In exploring these issues it is to draw to the conclusion that Near Death Experiences are realistic, and they are transformation spiritual glimpse into eternity through the Creator God Himself, based on the individual and their faith, life and revelations obtained or reveled from their unique NDE.

Glossary (Commonly Used Terms)

- I. **Clinical Death:** A declared by medical or individuals as all life functions have ceased, there is an absence of breathing, heart-beat or any function that constitutes that physical life as being sustained. In a clinical setting such as a hospital there is no sign of brain activity and the Individual cannot support breathing or maintain a heart-beat. When this occurs all medical endeavors to sustain life have failed or will have no viable outcome and death occurs.
- II. **Brain Anoxia:** A medical condition that occurs , in which the brain is without oxygen at least 4 to 5 minutes causing brain cells to die, resulting in either death or permanent brain trauma.
- III. **Code Blue:** A medical -community term, in which the heart-rate of a critical ill or sudden emergency ill patient has caused and caused the heart to either cease or reach a dangerous level, that is either rhythmically too high or too low. Without immediate intervention this condition will result in physical death. The intervention requires a team of specialist such as emergency attendants, doctors,

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nurses, or what medical staff is available at the onset of the emergency, in order to attempt recitation of the patient.

- IV. **Eidetic Images:** A visual imagery, in which a person's memory can be reproduced with accuracy and in detail.
- V. **Fear-Death Experience (FDE):** A somewhat unique research term in which the fear of death can be so great among some people that they can cause themselves to experience a NDE, through a trancelike mode.
- VI. **Enlightenment:** To provide or receive spiritual intellect in reverence to God's Words or a spiritual experience with God.
- VII. **Grace:** God's freely given generosity of Himself to humankind, through Christ, Jesus.
- VIII. **Genre:** A class or category having particular identifiable form, style, and content, which may distinguishes itself for anything else.
- IX. **Mindsight:** A state of transcendental awareness that enables an individual sighted or blind to access knowledge not available in a normal waking state.
- X. **Myth of Amazing Grace:** The idea that when a person has a NDE he is to return to earth as a selfless-servant for God.
- XI. **NDE (Near Death Experience or Episode):** an experience in which a person has spiritually spirited from a physical body due to medical death. It is a sense of another world, which is either pleasant or unpleasant,, religious or non-religious occurrence to individuals who have been clinically dead and return to the physical body or near death in a clinical manner

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- XII. **Signature Features:** Components and commonalities of a NDE scenarios that are present in the majority of cases
- XIII. **Soul:** The principle of life that is the animator of life in the human form, in which God Himself breathed into the physical body of man in creation as the Father of the human race.
- XIV. **Spirit:** Greek translation of "breath"-the reference of being born of the "Breath of God" His energy that is thus Creator and Sustainer.

MY PERSONAL NDE JOURNEY

Twenty-five years ago, I experienced a NDE (Near-Death Experience or Episode), and it altered my life thinking [psychologically and spiritually. During the month of August 1986; I was experiencing an extreme amount of personal and financial controversy in my life. I was married, but separated from my husband, caring for two small children, and working two full time jobs. I worked at night for a local hospital and worked clerical job in the daytime.

The hours spent in between working were spent keeping house, helping the children with school work and extra activities at school. My children at that time were between the ages of 4 and 11. I had trained myself to survive on very little sleep I normally got in approximately 3 to 4 hours nightly of sound sleep and this seemed to energize me to take on another 8 hour shift of work. I was determined that my schedule would not affect my children's lives any more than the separation of their father. They

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had to learn to balance in a household that was once a solid household of two parents that was suddenly scaled down to one very over-worked parent.

It was during this period of working 6 to 7 day weekly from 15 to 18 hours daily, that I became physically ill. I grew very weak and tired; nevertheless I persisted not to give in to my illness, therefore i continued to work. I begin to notice that when was able to lie down at night I started to awaken, several times with wet clothing, due to running a low grade fever and sweating.

I would go to work and mentally forget my physical problems, because I did not run a fever nor sweat in the daytime hours. I was committed to staying busy and my sole concentration was on getting paid for the next 8 hours of work and getting home to my children.

The children's father would come over and babysit them while I worked at night, arriving a few minutes before my scheduled leave time. It seemed regardless of taking vitamins and drinking fluids my tiredness continued to grow with each passing day. My fever returned often at night and the night sweats now persisted day and night. No amount of over-the-counter medications made any effect on pass a few hours of relief. I finally relented and saw a physician after almost 3 weeks of feeling awful. I was surprised but not shocked when I was diagnosed with double pneumonia.

I was told by my physician that I needed to be hospitalized, but I resisted stating that I had no one to care for my children, therefore the physician relented and I was given IV fluids, a breathing treatments, inhaler, antibiotics and a work excuse for 7 days,

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with instructions if my fever rose higher than 101 degrees or if experienced an increased shortness of breath or it worsened, I was to report immediately to a hospital emergency room, and prepare to be admitted. However, I was determined that I was going to work; therefore, I only took off from work one day, from both of my jobs. I called in to work with the excuse of having a bad cold and not with the true diagnosis of double pneumonia.

No one at work or in my family knew that I had seen a doctor or how ill I really was, therefore it was easy to call in being off stating I was just sick with a cold was my excuse to both of my jobs to the Human Resource Departments. I took my medications and used my inhaler and I felt better enough to sleep (just the fact of getting 8 hours sleep was a treat to me, regardless of being very ill). The next day I returned to work and it was hard to be able to act as if I felt better when in fact I vividly remember feeling even worse, than ever. The coughing increased and the sweats returned greater in intensity.

When I arrived home after picking one child up from daycare and the other from an after-school event, making dinner and doing homework, I suddenly knew I was in serious trouble. My breathing was harsher and I was sweating to the point until water poured down my back, due to sweating. My coughing felt like I was having a sledge hammer pounded in my chest and began to breathe as sparingly as possible, because it hurt so painfully to inhale. As dumb, as it sounded I had not picked up the phone to call into my night job again even though I knew I should go to the emergency room, but instead, I made the choice to take a shower and get dressed for work.

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The children had retired to their bedrooms and I proceeded to lie in the bed hoping that I could get 3 or 4 hours rest believing I would feel better. As I lay down I felt horrible, and everything hurt my chest, my head, and my skin. My breathing was deep, labored and strained.

My physical condition continued to deteriorate, my fever was high I was burning up. I could feel the sweat run from my forehead running down my face and my head was soaked, and then started to be induced with chills. It seemed as though while I was lying in the bed I was entwined in an endless cycle of pain, coughing, struggling to breathe, continuous sweats, my ribs hurting, followed by more pain, finally wrenching cold chills. I remember feeling as though I was dying and frankly there was a part of me that just for a brief moment would have welcome death. I did not remember ever in my lifetime being as physically sick as I was at that particular moment. I felt like dying if not easier would be less painful than hurting from my chest to my skin with every breath I took. During these times I thought about God asked Him to help me then dismissed the thought once I spoke it.

If I were to speak about my spiritual beliefs I would say at that very moment I would have said that I knew of God but at that time I did not have a personal relationship with Jesus. My husband was not a believer; he has some weird belief in finding Zen and equality in the universe. Although when he was present in the home he accompanied me and the children to my local church services as often as possible. I later understood that his behavior was out of façade of false duty to me and not genuine desire to know the Lord.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

I was raised by a Christian mother, and an abusive father, but nevertheless I and all my siblings had been reared in the local church environment. My mother felt like it was the right thing to do, to have your family attend church weekly. However, to tell the truth I enjoyed the singing, but got very little out of the "Hell and Brimstone" sermons. I learned so little from my church experiences that I was always the first family to leave after services were over, having done my Christian duty by attending in the first place. I must admit I did not understand the term salvation or having a Christian relationship with Christ.

I knew that I believed in the Lord. Therefore, what I experienced on that particular night, I was not prepared for, nor was I expecting any kind of revelation from God or supernatural encounter to occur. In fact I will say I was questing God's true Sovereignty, sine my life seemed to be so overwhelmingly hard. My mother would always tell me "the Lord will not put more on you than you can bare"; I felt at that moment in my life my mother's saying was a lie, for surely I could not on one more day or indefinitely in the emotional, physical, and financial state I was living in at the moment.

I begin to notice as I lay still that I my body was getting very cold, icy cold starting in the bottom of my feet. However, I did not have enough strength to move my feet, or pull additional cover up over me, after all it early September and the weather was still relatively warm. This letharginess continued to spread over my body and my limbs felt like lead was in them and I could not lift my hands or move my feet.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

The icy coldness continued to creep up my legs, as if there were ice chips in my veins. The further up the ice chips in my veins ascended in my body the heavier my body became, my limbs felt like lead poured in them as if I weighed a ton, therefore the less movement I attempted the better it would be for me. It was simply too much of an effort to even attempt to move, so I stayed still in the bed lying on top of my bed covers. It was at that time that I realized shockingly that I was in the process of dying and yet, strangely I was not afraid. I had an almost anticipatory joy of the event of my impending death.

There were no last good-byes no farewells, just my imminent thinking "Lord this is it and I am ready". I had no thoughts of my children or my other immediate family, no regrets, no grand affirmations and though I could hear sounds in the house there was no reason for me to attempt to cry out.

The coldness contend to ascend up my body, but amazingly the pain begin to disappear, inch by inch wherever the ice ascended the pain left and the relief inside of my head was joyously instant. As the feeling of ice-coldness ascended to my chest I felt my breathing though labored begin to slow down, and I noticed that it no longer hurt to breath. It was a miracle for just a little while ago I was racked with pain and deep chest coughing with each breath I took. I was no longer struggling to pull air in my lungs. I can only describe my feelings as deep, free breathing, in which the act of breathing seemed to be getting shallower by the second. Amazingly once the ice descended to my shoulder area I realized I was no longer breathing and that was fine.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

However, soon as the ice reached my facial area I was suddenly unexplainably **popped** outside of my body.

In a flash I went from **lying** in the bed in agony and **sickness, unbelievable** coldness creeping up my body, to not breathing and **now hello world I am** suddenly floating above myself, actually looking down at my fully cloth **body** dressed to go to work body. **I viewed by died body methodically, for I was lying** with my eyes closed and hands beside my sides immovable, **by body frozen, pain etched on my facial features and my body** dead. Yet, I was free! I was having an incredible experience that was to later be **in my life a major** spiritual transformational to me.

As I floated above my body, **in the corner of the room** I begin to notice things such as I had no shape I was in essence either spirit or gas, formless, but yet I felt whole and complete. I was not aware of any breathing efforts on my own nor was I in any physical or emotional pain. I was **formless in** shape, shapeless, but whole, not spread out, but compact within a space, yet not feeling confined. I was hovering in the air, not **being in the air but, feeling like I was somehow a** part of the air. **I was** occupying a small space just under the bedroom ceiling, but feeling like I could fill the entire bedroom if I wanted to be more exposed.

I stared at my body wondering **why** my facial expression appeared to be contorted, as if I had been in so in pain **laying** the bed. I had no memory of illness, or pain, it was as if that was no longer important **enough to remember** and it certainly was not a part of my now present world, for I felt no pain only wholeness and **strange sense of** peace. I had no conscious thought of whom I was before the moment of my soul's

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

departure from my body. However, I knew in order to be in the air I must have certainly have had a life, since I appeared to be in my late twenties or early thirties.

It was such a dispassionate look at me, which it could have been anybody's body lying there whom I was causally clinically observing. There was no thought of the house, family, kids, or job, there was no conscious resignation of any of these elements of my former life, simply peace, observance, completeness knowing without any words being spoken I was only in the room for a little while and that this phenomena being up in the air was not my final resting place. I did not know where I was headed, but I knew it was a good place and that there was an expectancy that someone was coming to me and that person would take me to my final home. I knew that I had somewhere important to go and my observations, at this time were only of my own thoughts of myself, which were merely temporary non-lasting Impressions.

I begin to feel a presence surround me, though I was spirit there was a consistency of being a compact entity, and I felt a warm impression of someone who cared a lot about me surround the entire room. I did not see anyone, but I knew in my heart that whoever was with me had been sent from God. I felt no fear, no anxiousness, had no questions, I just knew that my time for being in the room was soon over, whatever journey I was on it was soon be ready for me to be taken to the next step.

I remember a sense of transformation, for I was being gathered as if I was taking shape or form and I reached out my hand and I was shocked because I actually had a hand and I was becoming a version of my physical body, though not weighted, but

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

incredibly light and translucent, it was me. However, I still saw my dead body on the bed.

My hand was taken it was held by this caring presence and I felt myself being pulled up into the air. However, as soon as I started my descent up I heard a child's voice, a girl (I had no recollection it was my daughter, or that I even had children only a girl's voice). The child said "Momma! Momma!, Momma no"! There was so much terror in her voice, and in that instant I immediately recognized this child as my daughter and I pulled back my hand and said "God, no! I can't go my kids need me." It was as if suddenly, all my memories returned back to me, who I was, where I was, who my kids were, my entire life can back to my memory as quick as an eye can blink. I was immediately transferred back into my body, it was like a pulling in effect, it felt like a wall hit me when I entered my body.

I woke up, set straight in the bed, and felt my body to make sure I was real flesh, and then I cried. I knew what had happened to me, I had been in the process of going home to Jesus, up to heaven. I knew that I had physically died, and I knew for a fact now that God and Christ were real, and heaven was real, and there is without a doubt life after death.

I ran to my daughter's room and she was crying, she said that she had a dream and in her dream she saw that I was leaving her, going up in the air and she was running after me trying to catch me and pull me down, because I was going up high in the air. She said "Momma you had wings on your dress". I remember just hugging her,

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

then going to my son's room gathering him up in a hug and just thanking the Lord for sending me back, for giving me another chance at life.

A dam of emotions over took me and I wept for a long time. I felt as though emotionally I was falling apart. I had no more anger, resentments, all hurt was gone and I begged God for my forgiveness, for my sins. Church was real, God was real, and Christ was real, they loved me. I felt the connection that Jesus was true, for He really did care for me. I was no longer mad at God about my sister's death due to cancer, for I knew now where she was; she was with Jesus!

Next the most incredible thing or thought occurred to me, I was not hurting! I was not in any pain! I was breathing just fine! I felt great! Where was the Pneumonia? Where was the coughing? Where was the icy coldness? Where was terrible pain in my chest? Where was the fever, my head was cool? All my Pneumonia symptoms had disappeared, they were all gone! I looked at the clock and what had seemed like an eternity of time had actually occurred under one hour's time. How could this be? How could I go from being worn down, emotionally overwhelmed and deathly ill, to physical death, to peace, to leaving for heaven, to back to my body, from a lack of belief to conviction about God, and suddenly now physically healed, all in less than 1 hour? It was a miracle that had occurred in my life, though at the time I was not quite sure how to process it. I wanted to shout it to the world but I knew I had to keep to myself, because no one would believe it and I had to rehash it myself. I did not know I had experienced a NDE, I just knew something miraculous had occurred spiritually in my life.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

I was glad I had not called in to work, for I was now healthy, feeling rested and could now go and work 8 hours and come home and work 8 more hours. I had incredible energy with less than 1 hours sleep. I knew I had a lot to think about, but it was scary to me so I put it aside to later write it down and think about it, for that moment I had a job at the hospital to complete. I went to work that night with bells on my toes! I was so happy and I had no much energy, that I felt invincible. I had no physical problems; it was if I had never been sick, in fact I felt better than I had in months!

Working as a Unit Secretary in a hospital meant that whenever there was an emergency I had to be "Johnny on the spot" and the fastest way to cover 9 floors of hospital units, was to travel by stairways and not elevator. Therefore, all night I ran from the 9th floor to the basement by way of stairs and I felt great! I came home from work still full of energy and I worked my next 8 hour job happily, looking forward to the night off and what I knew was yet to come, a peaceful pain-free, sleep.

I refused for quite some time to revisit the event that had occurred to me, and I tried once or twice to tell someone my story, but each person got uncomfortable in my presence and I could see it in their eyes, they were questioning my mental sanity. I never told my pastor, for I had learned that no one believed or understood what I was saying and I did not want to be embarrassed or cause some bad rumors about my mind beginning to slip to start. Therefore, I kept my "secret" all to myself, for a very long time. I could not tell anyone, but I know it happened and no one could take that away from me, for it belonged to me.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

Even though I choose not to share with any others, my “secret”, I must say the event changed my personality, convictions, beliefs, and my life in so many ways. I recognized the “realness” of an Eternal God. I knew that a person could be preached to, talked to, read to, or many things, but if God is not real in that person’s heart, He is reduced to being only great hero in a great oversized romantic book, called the Bible. I now felt real love for and from God; I no longer had fear of Him; I no longer thought of Him as a destroying, judgmental, somewhat selfish God, that my pastor screamed about every Sunday morning. God had a face and it was colored by love and His Son Jesus was part of that real love. God was real and the Bible was true.

I begin to innate changes in my life, now when I went to church it was different the message now had meaning behind it, and I actually begin to take my Bible to church and read the Scriptures that were being preached. I joined a Bible study group and it seemed as if I was learning a lot, though not necessarily practicing everything I learned. I learned that prayer was my communication channel to God. I begin to pray in truth, not just the Lord’s Prayer and not prayers that I had heard my pastor recite, but my personal prayers. I gave my life to Christ, not at the church I attended, but at a church I passed by one night and I could hear the choir singing and I knew in my heart it was time to submit, so in 1987, I crossed the threshold to truly commit my life to Christ.

My life went on and eventually my experience though written down was replaced by the everyday drama called life. I placed it back on the back burner and every now and then I would think about it or wonder about it, but with my children growing up and all kinds of work issues, I poured my time into service for the Lord at my local church

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and as the time changed I thought about the event less and less, although there were several times particularly in Bible study that I wished I could tell someone of my experience with death, God and the afterlife.

It was not until the death of my estranged husband in 1993, that I realized that I had not truly placed my NDE (Near-Death Experience) out of my mind. Once again I was confronted with the reality of death, close at home. My husband's death event brought back to me in full memory my experience with God. I found peace in thinking about the fact there is life after death. I experienced the presence and peace of the Lord during my darkest moments of grief.

I relished in the fact that death was not the end of life, but a new beginning, for I had experienced it and I knew it to be true. I drew closer to the Lord's and as my relationship with Christ grew over the years and through the my personal challenges such as a diagnosis of terminal cancer in 1996, given only 6 months to live; I have found a strange solace in my memories of my NDE, and it has brought me great peace and given me strength, based on the fact that there is a Father and Savior that loves me, even when it's hard to love myself, or often times this love is in spite of myself. I know the love of Christ is real and the Kingdom of Heaven is real.

Church is no longer a chore it is a life. In fact now I am a pastor, remarried and my children are grown and blessed loving the Lord. Therefore I know my NDE was a catalyst for major transformation in my life spiritually.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

I over many years have, often drifted back to my experience many times, relishing in it, but still wanting to totally understand it and find out if others too have experienced something similar to my NDE. I read many articles and books concerning the matter and I became less apprehensive about sharing my story. I found out there were hundreds of thousands of people that have had NDE experiences; I was not alone! I have shared my NDE with many individuals over the years, only to find a large number of the people I have shared my experience with have surprised me, for once I opened up, they too had a NDE to share with me; they too were relieved to tell their experience to someone that understood. However, there are still remaining questions that I have and i need to reflect and attempt to find answers to my questions.

MY SEARCH FOR ANSWERS

- What is a true NDE (Near Death Episode or Experience?)
- What Constitutes a Clinical Death?
- What is Spiritual Separation from the Physical Body?
- What are the Spiritual Concepts of life after death?
 - What is in heaven?
 - What is in hell?
 - What are the commonalties?
 - What is the scientific research of the phenomena of NDE?
 - What are the significant NDEer researches have to say
 - What are others saying about the changes in their lives?
 - How does have a NDE affect an individual

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

These are just a small sample of the questions that I have harbored inside of me since I have had my NDE. My questions I will attempt to address in a mode, which can be used apologetically towards promoting the Kingdom of God, for believers and to settle my mind and its quest for a deeper understanding of my experience. I do not believe in coincidence. I believe that God has brought about everything in each person's life for a specific reason and I am attempting to find my reasons, through the Christian exploration of the subject matter of NDE's.

Near-Death-Experiences (NDE) has received great attention practically in the past two decades, yet there is still a lot to learn of the subject. There is great skepticism concerning the subject, some believe it is a grand hallucination, or psychosis, or even the result of the brain lacking critical oxygen and a person almost dies but does not actually physically die.

Individuals that have experience a NDE know that it is a real supernatural event, and their death actually occurred physically. However, to truly understand NDE one must have died and come back to their body to understand this unique journey into a spiritual realm of life.

My NDE study is focused on my personal quest for answer and to explain the phenomena of NDE by evaluating individual cases and looking at the positive transformations that resulted from their NDE experience. I will also explore as negative aspects of individuals that have experience a NDE. I will explore and examine the

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

effects of having this unexpected experience and as look at the attitudes, changes and personal effect, which occurred, after the experience.

Historical Research

Speaking from a Christian Apologetical point of view, I feel the NDE experience is a forerunner in gaining a greater sense of the intimacy of Christ the Savior. I feel that the individual who has had a NDE, has been given a great privilege of having an external glimpse into eternity, whether the judgment be heaven or hell. For those that do not believe it is a phenomenon that continues to require further explanation and documentation.

Many in the scientific world are afraid to embrace the concept of NDE or life after death; some fear being ostracized and losing their educated credibility in their field. Therefore, the scientific community there is a crack for explanation in the door for NDE and it is neither valid nor embraced by most of the medical or scientific world. NDE resistance can be summarized in this statement:

"Despite growing public acceptance of the authenticity of Near-Death-Experiences the general scientific and medical attitude remains unconvinced and disapproving; even scorn all of the whole theory. This attitude is rooted in the scientific dogma or not accepting anything as valid anything unavailable for physical examination. The rub is that consciousness cannot be confined or confirmed in a laboratory". (Crabbendan, 1992, p, 202)

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

Noted researcher, P.M.H. Atwater L.HD, PhD, in the field of NDE, particularly in children, she states that a complete definition of a NDE is "an intense awareness, sense, or experience of other worldliness, whether pleasant or unpleasant that happens to people who are at the edge of death. It is of such magnitude that most experiences are deeply affected-many to the point of making significant changes in their lives afterward because of what they went through".¹ However, her research and groundbreaking work is a reflection of a subject matter that has been researched and discussed for close to 100 years if not longer.

Her research focused on NDEs of people of other cultures, foreign born, or different racial backgrounds, rather than just solely typical white Judeo-Christian that are profiled in a large number of research clients in the field of NDE. She documented over 3,000 cases of European, Arabic, black, Caucasians, African, Canadians, and Latinos in her study, including children. Her samples included a 23% Latinos, 12% black, 5% Asian and 60% white or various cultures. She wanted to research the accounts of NDEs in a multi-cultural ratio and sample.

There were many forerunners that have made great progress in the field of NDE as well as breaking the taboo of speaking of life after death, or the proclaiming that the Bible is indeed real, as it states in the Book of 1 Corinthians 15: 54-55 "So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?'"

¹ P.M.H. Atwater, The Big Book of Near-Death Experiences, pg 9

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

As one can see the aspects of an afterlife are explored and promised in one of the oldest most sacred of books, the Bible. However, Christians and scientist have been trying to explain the phenomena of NDE due to its commonality of the experiences; it is no longer able to be ignored. NDE statics report, that approximately 60% of the population is projected to have had a NDE at some point in their lives. NDE's are not exclusive to Christians, but occurs in other cultures, religions or to those who claim to be atheist, with no belief. NDE's are not localized or exclusive events among selected humankind, there are no geographic, gender, age, or cultural barriers associated with NDE's.

The oldest NDE on record appears to be the story of Er, as told by the Greek Philosopher, Plato in the *Republic*.ⁱⁱ After being "killed" in battle, Er came back to life on the funeral pyre and told of his journey into another world. He was told that he must be a messenger to humanity by returning and informing others what he had observed. Further documentation of an NDE is found in 1917, by Dr. A. S. Wiltse,ⁱⁱⁱ a physician of Skiddy, Kansas. He related his 1889 experience to Frederic W. H. Myers, a pioneering psychical researcher. Dr. Wiltse was suffering from Typhoid Fever and his "apparent death" was said to be the fist medical professional to acknowledge the phenomenon of what is known as NDE. He called this phenomena "subhuman pulse and temperature" as an actual real event and not imagination was Dr. A.S. Wiltse's personal story.

He documented, wrote and published an article in the *Saint Louis Medical and Surgical Journal* in 1889, about being a young man who had Typhoid Fever who was pronounced dead due to a subnormal pulse and temperature. The victim for all

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

purposes was declared deceased, however, 30 minutes later he awakened and explained about having a religious experience, in which he was taken to heaven and returned to his body. As a young man he fully recovered from Typhoid Fever.. His clinical death was estimated by an attending nurse and physician to be one half hour long. Below are inserts from the actual report of his personal experience as given to his physician:

Dr. Wiltse states "I lost, I believe, all power of thought or knowledge of existence in absolute unconsciousness," Wiltse recalled for Myers. "I came again into a state of conscious existence and discovered that I was still in the body, but the body and I had no longer any interest in common. I looked in astonishment and joy for the first time upon myself—the me, the real Ego, while the not-me closed it upon all sides like a sepulcher of clay."Wiltse went on to say that he could see the wonders of his bodily anatomy and realized that he was in fact dead. "I have died, as men term death, and yet I am as much a man as ever," he recalled thinking. "I am about to get out of the body. I watched the interesting process of the separation of soul and body. By some power, apparently not my own, the Ego was rocked to and fro, laterally, as a cradle is rocked, by which process its connection with the tissues of the body was broken up. After a little time the lateral motion ceased, and long the soles of the feet beginning at the toes, passing rapidly to the heels, I felt and heard, as it seemed, the snapping of innumerable small cords."As his spirit emerged from the head, he floated up and down laterally until the soul broke loose from the body. He arose, his wife and

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

sister weeping at his bedside oblivious to his separation. He then wandered outside, but could see a small spider web-like cord running from his soul body back to his physical body to the area of the solar plexus. He soon became aware of a "presence," which he could not see, but which he knew was entering into an overhead cloud. "The presence did not seem, to my mind, as a form, because it filled the cloud like some vast intelligence." He began receiving thoughts. "These, I said, are his thoughts and not mine; they might be in Greek or Hebrew for all power I have over them. But how kindly am I addressed in my mother tongue that so I may understand all his will. Yet, although the language was English, it was so eminently above my power to reproduce that my rendition of it is far short of the original. 'This is the road to the eternal world. Yonder rocks are the boundary between the two worlds and the two lives. Once you pass them, you can no more return into the body. If your work is complete on earth, you may pass beyond the rocks. If, however, upon consideration you conclude that...it is not done, you can return into the body.' Dr. Wiltse approached the rocks and was tempted to cross the boundary line, but then hesitated. "I knew that I was to be stopped. I felt the power to move or to think leaving me. My hands fell powerless at my side, my head dropped forward, the cloud touched my face and I knew no more." In "astonishment and disappointment," Wiltse then found himself back in his physical body. "What in the world has happened to me?" he exclaimed. "Must I die again?"

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

It was not until 1893 that the near-death phenomenon was given a clinical name, by researcher Albert von St. Gallen Heim^{iv}. He documented a series of experiences of men who were mountain climbers that had fallen into the Alps Mountain. He took his research further into documenting soldiers who were critically wounded in war and experiences of men and women with near drowning experiences. In an article called the Heim Article, he reported that the majority of the people he interviewed 60% had experienced a life after death experience during their accidents, thus the term for this type phenomenon became known as experiences of "Life after death of NDE".

However, there are documents and reports as early as 1825 discovered by famed NDE Researcher Dr. Bruce Greyson, which tell the stories of individuals that have died and returned to their bodies having described a great religious event, with views of heaven and spiritual revelation during their clinical death.

There is a lengthy and clear documentation dated in 1864 of a young girl, Daisy Drydon^v, who at age 10 for all purposes died in California, but on her deathbed she described visions of Jesus, deceased family members and spirit beings. These events occurred moments before the child actually died, and it was considered proof at that time that another world existed for the dead, for death was not the end but the beginning of another life in another invisible land.

The incident I describe below is the incident would be the precursor to Dr. Raymond Moody's interest and research into the area of NDE and it actually happened not in his presence, but in 1943^{vi}. A military doctor assisted a private by the name of George Ritchie, whom he pronounced dead. The body was taken to the morgue, where

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his death was reconfirmed by a higher medical personnel party. An orderly claimed to see the hand of the soldier move during transport and due to this report in order to prove death to the orderly, his body was given a shot of adrenaline and miraculously all of his vital signs resumed to normal. Richie states he returned to his body and immediately begins to speak and he made a complete medical recovery. ▲

George Ritchie, later becomes a Psychiatrist, by which he spoke often of his NDE, while he was considered clinically dead. He spoke about the fact that by being in overcrowded the morgue he had to search for his body to return back to his physical state, and he would found the right body to return to because his left hand was hanging out from the morgue sheet and he spotted his class ring on his left hand. He states that if he had not seen the ring he does not know if he would have been able to return to his body. ▲

In 1956, while in medical school an intern named Dr. Raymond Moody heard Dr. George Ritchie speak about his back-to-life experience though he was clinically dead, which occurred in 1943 during the war complicit. Dr. Moody felt and intense curiosity an immediate passion about life and death after listening to Fr. Ritchie. Moody reflected and was reminded of the many such stories he had heard from several critically wounded individuals who too felt they had died and returned back to their bodies. He wanted the answers as to what it was, why it happened and what experiences occurred. He became convinced of the validity of the subject medically and spiritually. ▲

It was not until 1972 that Dr. Moody began to be a leading authority on these pheromones. Dr. Moody though considered controversial about the concept of life after

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

death for a medical profession to indorse became in great demand to present lectures on the subject matter that he termed: Near-Death Experiences (NDE).

In 1975 Dr. Moody published his fist book of 150 documented accounts of NDE's in which he entitled it Life After Life. He essentially ripped open the medical and scientific significance in to a not understood phenomenon, thus becoming the father of the first generation of researchers into the area of NDE. In turn the study has become a new type of science which has had a profound impact scientifically, medically and religiously in millions of person's lives today.

Dr. Moody documented thousands of cases of self-reported encounters with death. Individuals that have reported near-death experiences were pronounced clinically dead for a period of time from a few minutes to hours, in which they have reported they have journeyed beyond death into another spiritual realm.

In Dr. Moody's Life After Life, he emphatically states that *"First of all, I have never been close to death myself, so I am not giving a firsthand account of experiences which I have had myself a vast literature on paranormal and occult phenomena...and my religious upbringing i consider though he I am concerned with spiritual and religious doctrines, teachings and questions...and that religion has many answers to the fundamental truths we speak of in death and life. Therefore he is a Methodist Christian by faith"*^{vii} he is convinced of the validity and great significance for the medical, philosophical, academia, psychological, theological and other aspects of the ministry of the truths of NDE's.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

There were other pioneers in NDEs which are documented in the 19th century. Albert Heim, a Swiss Geologist, did extensive research in the field of NDR after he experiences a personal episode of NDE himself. He began to collect data on individuals that had near-fatal accidents and were willing to share their stories with him. He documented that 95% of the NDE cases he studied stated that time became expanded, yet their journey towards a bright heavenly light was lightening fast and the results caused these individuals to take a life reflection of their current lives and make positive changes. The person has been given a glimpse of an extension of life that is private and only experienced by the individual. It is a hope of a future existence and peep into a life transition that only begins at the point of physical death.

In 1977 Dr. Moody invited a dozen professionals to a lecture meeting in Charlottesville, Virginia to discuss his book and the increasing number of people who were contacting him with NDEs. As a result of this lecture/meeting a professional society was formed, it was called the *Association for Scientific Stud of Near-Death Phenomena* (ASSNDEP) developed a professional journal called the *Anabipsis*, which reports documentation of individuals willing to share their NDEs..

Raymond Moody, MD was adamant to the medical and psychological community that he was not out to prove that life after death existed, but to show that this phenomena of the NDE experience was real and not an altered state of consciousness or the result of an oxygen starved brain. He encouraged the medical community that there was a great need to listen and respond to their patients who tell of their NDE. He implored medical and clinical professionals to take the time to listen to the patient with

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

an open mind, for it was benefice to a patient's physical, emotional and spiritual recovery.

Dr. Michael Sabom, Cardiologist and Director of Cardiovascular Services at St. Luke's Hospital in Denver, Colorado, was inspired by Dr. Raymond Moody's book, *Life After Life* and in 1976, began to research NDEs in the hospital. He had access to all hospital records for the basis of his information as proof of clinical death. He wanted to study NDEs as to see how it would help to alleviate the fear of death in patients.

He believed that experiences of life after death of others can be used to inspire and relive fears that are common in people about the subject of death. And this understanding of after death one can understand the interconnection of life and death as a transition and not an ending.

He felt it was imperative to share with others the experiences gained or truths found, for when they returned to their lives the hope is to have a better life existence. He interviewed over 116 people in a five- year period, which became part of his research book on NDEs, *Recollections of Death, A Medical Investigation*^{viii}, which supports the conclusions of Dr. Raymond Moody.

In 1981 an international scientific study group was formed to address NDEs, this group which is in existence today is the *International Association for Near-Death Studies* (IANDS). It serves as an international clearing-house for NDE documentation, research and information. The IANDS organization produce a professional journal that is called the *Journal of Near-Death Studies*.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

What is Clinical Death, What Happens When The Body Dies?

To explore the aspects of clinical death is a topic that elicits different emotions for different people; some consider it a natural or unnatural phenomenon. There are many explanations from various professions as to the specific view of death. Many individuals avoid the topic of death, it is a taboo; perhaps it draws many to face their fears which are often associated with the reality of dying and the fear of the unknown spear of death. These fears are often hidden away in the locked doors of one's mind. Death is the natural symbol that humankind is not immortal and this brings psychological denial and fear to many about what happens to after death and is death the actual end of life or just the loss of all consciousness.

To know death creates an internal tension in our minds, because often time we want to remain innocent that death is a reality that each person of a physical body must at some point die. As Robert Romanyshyn, Psychology research^{ix}(1993) points out "to be all knowing sets up a tension between desire to know and the call to know, by removing it from our sight, we are not called to know death and therefore it eliminates the tension"

I feel that death is a transgression against life itself, and it is frightening to comprehend to most people. Life and death are synonymous to each other; death is unavoidable; death is not gender or race specific, death is universal; death is mysterious, the unknown is often unimaginable. The experience of death bears witness

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

of the body and the soul, there is a supernatural connection and to those that are not believers it is frightening. And rather than admit the fright or the possibility of an extension of life into the supernatural many will profoundly refute any near death experiences by attempting to place them in medical categories that can satisfy the logical mind. However, those that have experiences a NDE such as I, know better, for the experience is unforgettable and the results are lifelong embedded in our minds.

People are reluctant to transgress taboos. It singles them out and makes them possible targets for others' scorn. Those that make transgressions are frightening to others; they do not go along with what is considered acceptable and known. Death itself is a transgression as against life and is therefore a hushed taboo. The fact that death is considered a transgression against life is frightening to many people, even those that profess the Christian faith. I would like to add that death is visible in everything for life and death goes hand in hand. Both sexuality and death are spoken in public in only the most hushed of voices.

We are aware that the first obligation that a physician has is to preserve life, regardless of the quality of life that may result after the physical body is rescued from physical death. It is not the inner spirit or the essence (soul) of a person that is at stake, there is no consideration other than saving the physical body. The soul has no first or after thought and is of little or no significance to medical science.

Christians know that our body has the "breath of life" Genesis1:27 (NIV), from the Great Creator, God the Father in us and our souls cannot be destroyed by an earthly mechanism called the body when it clinically dies. Physicians are in the job of saving

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

the body, but not wrestling with our spirituality. It is normally not until a person faces a life or death crisis in their life or experience a NDE that a conscious develops beyond the clinical scope. Thinking about Death and NDEs challenges us to think of our own mortality, pain, suffering, and beliefs. French mathematician, Blaise Pascal^x wrote "it is easier to endure death without thinking about it than the thought of death without the danger of dying"^{xi}

Death to physicians is viewed different for it is the final Fortier of life and all life ceases. However, many Christians view death as simply and extension into life; if the soul is absent then life is absent and dependant on our lives Christ makes the determination of a final home in ether Heaven or Hell.

The clinical summary of death as seen by most physicians consists of clinical measurements, in order to determine if physical death has occurred. The common consensus is that death occurs when respiration and heartbeat have ceased to be automatic and continual in a body. In the 1800-early 1900's one of the oldest methods known for determining physical death was simply to place a mirror to the person's mouth and if there was breath the mirror would fog up, and if the mirror did not fog up the person was declared dead. However, there were individuals who were simply in deep comas, or a state of hyperthermia, in which the body temperatures were lowered so drastically that detectable heartbeats and respiration could not be measured.

As modern medicine advanced the criteria for death confirmation has changed in its analysis of when or if death has occurred. Dr. Jean Knox states death declared when in a hospital settings "Technicians attach to person electrodes that detect

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

electrical activity in the brain and this activity records a brain-wave pattern in a process called Electroencephalogram (EEG), which measures brain-wave activity. The EEG determines if there is no function (brain wave activity) in the Cerebral Cortex, (controls functions such as heart rate and breathing), which is the outer shell of the Cerebrum, which also is essential in his function of controlling heart rate, temperature, and breathing, which are known as a person's Vital Signs. A flat EEG reading indicates that the brain cells are dead, there is no activity of any brain function left, and the brain has died from a lack of oxygen and brain cells are the one tissue organ that does not regenerate or reproduce its cellular structure. If it is determined by a Neurologist that there is no brainstem response and there is no blood which contains oxygen surging the brain, the person is classified as clinically dead.

When the brain is deprived of oxygen brain cells begin to die within four to six minute, (Anoxia), when there is no activity in the brain and the brainstem is not functioning it cannot control or regulate the heart and breathing a clinical death is declared^{xxii}. This method of clinical death measurement standardization has become normalcy in the American medical culture. But, note that a definition of brain death is not necessarily the last stage of declaration of death. However, in 1968, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School published a set of medical standards for the determination of death, in which a patient in the hospital must be completely unresponsive with no vital signs, nor spontaneous breathing; no motor reflexes, no pupil reflexes to light and a flat EEG reading that has been taken twice during a 24-hour

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period with no changes in the readings, before a clinical death can be confirmed, when the person is on artificial life support.

Biblical Defense of Death

The Christian faith believes in the soul and it is the soul that will be with the Lord until the 2nd coming, in which a reuniting with a glorious new body is the prophecy of being with the Lord, as a believer.

The Bible is clear on its stance concerning death and the afterlife, in the book of 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 (NIV), the Bible states "So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable, it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body". Therefore the Christian death is more than a physical event it is a spiritual reconnection in the presence of the Lord. The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:8(NIV), "...I say and would prefer to be absent from the body and at home with Christ". The Christian finds hope and strength in the confidence that there is life after death and the spiritual aspect of life is essentially immortal. The Christian view of death is one of a celebration and not a homecoming faunally.

Christians are familiar with the process of physical death and the promises of an afterlife in Revelation 21: 12-18 (NIV), the Apostle John states "I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lamp stands and among the lamp stands was someone like the Son of Man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

white like wool, as white as snow, and his feet were blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In His right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said "Do not be afraid I am the First and the Last. I am the living One; I was dead and behold I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades".

The concept of an afterlife is fundamentally an important part of the heart and soul in the Christian faith. To be in a place that life is never ending with the Savior, and to never have to experience any type of death, pain, tears, and only gladness. To be in a place and in a condition that is promised in the Scriptures of Revelation: 15-17 (NIV), "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night His temple and He who sits on the throne will spread His tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; He will lead them to springs of living water and God will wipe every tear from their eyes". The Christian looks forward to the comfort that death will bring the peace and the joy of another life after death.

The Christian is calmed and reassured by the declarations of the Father and the Savior, knowing that when we die, one day a spiritual kingdom is the reward of a spiritual inheritance. A Christian should not fear death in a physical manner, for God has made provisions and has given us His promise to everlasting life. Those Christians that are suffering with diseases, illness, chronic pain, that desire a release from the

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physical suffering of an earthly body normally come to a place of peace and expectancy waiting on the Lord, knowing that today may pass, but tomorrow in the Lord is never ending.

Scientist has discovered in a graveyard in Turkey that the Neanderthal man skeletal fossils, who scientist believe to be over 100,000 years old. The fossils show that these ancient men buried their dead with flowers as if they were in celebration of death and not fearing death. Graveyards all over the world have a common theme echoed, in which there is a common belief that there is life after death, that physical death is not the final transition.

Death is a topic that is common, familiar and realistic in the clinical aspect, yet it still holds a mystery and great fear to many even in a religious aspect. The Bible is clear on its position of death for it states in Ecclesiastes 7:2 (NIV), *"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart"*. Death will occur to each human being, and unfortunately many will be young, middle -aged and the elderly. All of mankind is subject to physical death. However, it is the glimpse into the afterlife that many including myself have experienced that must be evaluated in its content of physical occurrence and spiritual enlightenment.

The Commonality of Documented NDEs And Case Histories

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

There is a commonality of NDE experiences of those who have experienced a NDE. Noted NDE Researcher, Dr. Jeffery Long (2010), in his book, *The Evidence of the After Life*, along with pioneer NDE research, Dr. Raymond Moody (1977), *Life After Life*, and noted death researcher Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1998) with NDE research, Kenneth Ring in *Heading Towards Omega*, each agree and state there are several key elements that seem to be common in 80% of the NDE 's that have been studied or interviewed as documentation.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross went further in her research, which included individuals who have had, but, where born blind from birth. These individuals were actually able to describe the events and objects that were in the room they died in, they were given instant sight though the experience. It alludes to the Christian belief that the body and the soul are separate entities as according to the Bible. The Bible states in Ephesians 4:4 (NIV) *"There is one body, and there is one Spirit-just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call"*.

The commonalities of the NDE experience as follows.^{xiv}

- 1) Separation of the conscious mind from the actual physical body
- 2) There is an heightened sense of awareness
- 3) There is generally a positive set of emotions or positive feeling involved
- 4) In the process
- 5) A sense of passing through a vortex or a tunnel
- 6) There is often a supernatural bright light, intensified white light
- 7) Encountering family members that have passed away or friends that are

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

- a. Deceased (the people are normally familiar to the person having the NDE)
- 8) There is a sense of time suspension and a sense of space
 - 9) Often the person experiences a NDE has a life review
 - 10) Experiencing a view of heaven or being in a heavenly realm
 - 11) The learning of special knowledge or information or advise given
 - 12) There is a sense of the return of the soul to the body whether it is voluntary or not voluntary
 - 13) If the experience is not positive with spiritual reference to God, it is an unpleasant nightmarish experience, which occurs in the realm of hell with life changing results
- I will explain each of the commonalities and explore various documented NDE accounts.

Physical Separation From The Body

This is the actual feeling or sensation of the spirit, (aka soul) leaving the physical body. Many individuals experience a sense of instant relief. If they were in pain all pain immediately ceases. There is often a sense of immediate peace and wherever the NDE has occurred the person possesses the ability to hear and see the surroundings. Many individuals such as I are aware of all that is happening around the area I was in vivid imagery and detail. It can be the sensation of being popped out and becoming a part of a great space, yet being in the entire space, seeing minute details of processes occurring around you. In recent studies by Dr. Jeffery Long research of 613 NDEers he documented that 75.4 % of the NDE cases he studied the individuals are aware of a spiritual separation, in which their physical bodies.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

Many people have a preconceived view of death and it is synonymous as in going to sleep. Statics show that 60% of Christians believe in the concept of a biblical eternity (heaven). In the Bible eternity is expressed in the Scripture John 14: 1-6 (NIV), *"Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In my Father's house there are many rooms, If it were not so I would have told you that I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also"*

The Christian has a promise from the Lord that death is not the end of life; it is simply the end of our earthly existence. The Apostle Paul goes further to state in 1 Corinthians 15:24 (NIV), *"Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after descreying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all his enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."*

Our hope as Christians is in an Eternal Savior who Himself was resurrected from the dead. Therefore, Christ has given humankind eternal life through His atonement, which is the **sacrificial** gift of eternal life after death. There is a place for the essence (souls) of humankind through the Creator; there is a home away from this worldly physical world. Below are is a case study that explains the separation of our soul and body.

NDE Documented Case Histories

Case Study: Michael^{xvi}

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

NDEer Michael^{xvi} recanted his experience of his NDE during a time that as a youth he was severely abused and beaten, by a parental attack. He was unconscious for total of four hours. He remembered leaving his body and having no more pain. It was during this time he felt himself travel, going through a large tunnel, which was filled with safety and love. The light at the end of the tunnel was beautiful and he knew his body was left behind him. He remembers the love and acceptance of the light and the feeling of going home. He remembers waking up feeling peaceful and safe in his bruised body.

Case Study: Sara^{xvii}

Sara underwent surgery for a brain aneurysm and a new surgical procedure that required the doctors to lower her body temperature to 60 degrees, which would stop her heart and breathing, which would flat- line her brain function to allow the aneurysm to be removed safely. It was during this time that Sara had a NDE and she described her body as having the sensation of popping out of her body and she was able to witness the specific surgical instruments used in her procedure to stop the bleeding of the aneurysm. She hovered over her body while casually looking down at her body on the operating table.

She observed the doctor sewing in her abdominal organs and she heard the conversation of all the attending nurses. She remembered that at some certain point at some point she begin to float out of the hospital room and traveled down a tunnel

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

which had a light at the end, At the end of the tunnel she met several of her deceased relatives and friends.

Her directions and information was telepathically communicated to her and she was given the choice that she could not stay or return for it was not her time but, if she continued her journey she could not go back to her body. She choose to come home and was taken aback by her deceased uncle to her body. She remembers she did not want to enter her body, because physically how horrible she appeared after surgery, but she recognized she was dead there was no heartbeat, nor brain waves though the ventilator continued to breath. She was told she had to jump back in by the uncle, and when she did not do this immediately, her uncle pushed her and suddenly she was back in her body and immediately she felt sever pain, she was alive with a heartbeat.

Heightened Senses of Reality

Out of the 74.4 % of NDEers surveyed report experiencing a feeling of a possessing a heightened senses of awareness. The note that all the senses are very sharp especially sight and hearing. The feeling of being wide awake and alert is heightened and almost overwhelmingly real. The retention of detailed conversations of individuals present during the death scene, such as an accident, hospital, home or area that the physical death has occurred. Minute details such as where objects are dropped and small details become consciously crystal sharp.

However, to the NDEer it is a feeling of normalcy as if this is the way our senses should have always been, complete awareness of one's surroundings. The external

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

feelings are internalized, such as the sensation of coolness or heat is felt not just from the outside but totally through one's entire self.

Case Study: Karen^{xviii}

Karen was an elderly lady who had been blind since childhood. She experienced a NDE in the hospital and she was immediately aware that she could see she was no longer blind. She had an acute sense of imagery, colors, and the surprising reality that she instinctively knew colors and she had never seen color. She reported seeing colors that she knew were not even possible in the earthly world. She was able to describe instruments and techniques used during the resuscitation her body. She was able to see people and knew who they were though she had never seen anyone before. She was able through this heightened sense of reality to relate various emotions that individuals went through in the room as if she had a window into each person's mind.

Positive Emotions and Feelings

There is sense of completeness emotionally, such as the feeling of being surrounded by total love, compassion, understanding, safety, joy, calmness and peace. There is no anxiety, no fear, no questions, no want or need. To the NDEer it is an analytical objective observation seen through the eyes of a person that is void of any hostile emotion. It is a feeling of heightened intense awareness, sense or being in

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

another parallel type of world. Yet, once is aware of their impending death or that death has already occurred.

Light and darkness are more significant and vivid for the NDE survivor; it is as if light and dark are live entities with personal characteristics given to them. There is an acute awareness of movement and presence, but not time. Every detail of the experience no matter how minute, even the smallest detail is full blown and noticeable.

In the NDE experience there are typically an overwhelming sense of emotions and feelings. Almost all aspects are viewed in a peaceful mindset and a mindset that accepts that fate of what has happened, physical death. However, there is a small percent, roughly 3% of NDEs that are considered frightening to some and the experience is not a light, tunnel or place of love and comfort they are transported to. Some NDEs describe their experience as “going to hell and back”, and seeing horrors they never thought imaginable.

Some NDE have been unpleasant and term themselves as selfish individual, in their life-review in which they report of feeling the pain that they have caused others, or the selfishness of their lives are pointed out. This has brought about great fear and guilt of the kind of individual a person is, or what that person perceived themselves to be to others. The realization is the fact a person can be a mean, dark, cynical person in life is what prompted many NDEers to change inwardly they type of person they are, for it is the first time they have realistically seen their self the way others have seen them, in a negative light, through their personal life-review.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

Case Study: John^{xix}

John^{xx} was a 48-year old male, who was a successful business executive. He felt that had worked hard all of his life and he enjoyed the luxuries his current life could afford. After a particular staff meeting in which he enjoyed berating several key staff members about their performance not being up to his par, he retired to his office and began to feel pressure in his chest. His assistant called for an ambulance and it was a blur for him until he opened his eyes in the emergency room. He felt that he was being pulled out of his body and he realized he was floating above his body, watching the medical team attempt to resituate his heart. He remembered seeing one of the doctors actually straddle his chest while doing chest compressions.

He heard the physician call a "Code Blue" for cardiac arrest. He knew he had suffered a serious heart attack and he was dead. He noticed all the details in the rooms, the colors, the equipment and the fast pace of activity around his body. He heard the conversations around him; he felt the anxiety of the medical staff. He could taste the adrenalin they functioned on, yet he felt no urgency about anything for he knew he was dead. He was searching for the "light" that many people who almost died had talked about, and he yet, he could not find it.

He felt amazed and afraid thinking he would float in the room forever. John next remembered a type of dark spinning vortex that surrounded him, and appeared to

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

swallow him up like a tornado in the sky. He could hear the deafening sound of the roar of the wind as he traveled down at a tremendous speed into the spiral darkness.

He arrived in a place that was dark and wet feeling. He could feel the chill of damp water and the smell of the place was of rotten eggs and garbage. He heard many people moaning around him in intense pain. He could hear their sounds of suffering, yet he saw no faces. In the air appeared a dark faceless hooded large shadow who did not speak yet he knew what he was saying and he knew it was evil. It told him follow him and it pointed to a cave wall. John watched his life unfold as if it were on a movie reel. He saw his parents, whom he never appreciated their work hard ethics they implored, in order to give him as an only child every advantage in life; he saw his angry outburst towards them when he did not get his way. He saw scenes in his life of his attitude of indifference towards his parents and his lack of remorse or grief as each one died. He remembered their funeral as being simply an event he had to get through, for his mind was more on his evening business meetings than the funerals.

Each time he funeralized a parent he went back to work the same day immediately, after each funeral. He saw many scenes of how negative he treated people, seldom saying anything nice or encouraging, manly putting people down and berating them for little things, sometimes simply for the sake of showing he was the boss and he was in control.

He saw the meeting room at his business where the staff had gathered, his staff and he was shocked, because he felt they respected him, yet, they were talking about how awful he was as a person, and an employer. John neither saw nor heard anyone in

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the office mourning him; in fact they seemed relieved that he was gone. He overheard a staff member say that they would now be working with the co-owner who was the Vice President and he was a better, nicer, fairer person to be around with and work with on the job. He was hurt, for he had witnessed the fact that no one grieved for his life or business legacy.

He saw his children and realized when he was alive he seldom spent any time with them; he was always focused on self, money, and more self. For the first time in his life he experienced the feelings of remorse, and guilt. He understood what he had done to those he had hurt and the time he had wasted taking from others and seldom giving. He began to weep, he had not cried in over 20 years. He could not feel the tears on the outside, but he felt them inside like cold rocks, each individual tear touched his heart.

Once again another he experienced another first, he prayed to God for forgiveness. He prayed to the God he always ignored, not needing his help for he was a self-made man. He prayed and asked God to forgive him for the wrong in his life and to not allow his children to become like him. When he finished the prayer he heard a new strange voice tell him to leave and learn to do right by others in his life. When this was said he felt that he was being engulfed again in a swirling high speed black vortex and he felt the sense of being dropped and he was suddenly back, into his body.

He heard the physician say that they had a pulse; his heart was now beating in a rhythm. John's NDE was horror, but because of it he began to make positive strides in his life. He stopped being driven in the business world working 16 hour- days. He

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began to spend time with his children and became involved in their activities as well as being a better husband to his wife, emotionally. This inward change in John's personality allowed him to begin to express emotions and to value his family and not value money as his personal measure of success and as his god.

John made a commitment spiritually to learn more of the Lord and to foster a relationship with him. And because of his negative life-review he was a better employer; he learned to communicate with people in a positive manner. John had an experience of being doomed in hell, and he feels he was given the chance to come back in order to get it right, so that he never visits hell again.

However, there are a number of individuals whom prior to their NDE they did not consider themselves as having a particular religion concept or being a spiritual person. After their NDE they have found it difficult to adjust afterwards to their NDE. Many become confused as to the new feelings that they experience, such a love, warmth and peace. Many do not have an outlet to explore their encounter with or to speak of the changes that have occurred, such as heightened feelings, life sensitivities, or the realization that they have seen another world other than the physical world of earth.

Many NDE survivors feel they must keep their feelings inside, which causes turmoil and confusion in their lives, as they attempt to make positive changes inwards to their self, yet those around do not understand why the changes are occurring and the results of some relationships, it is founded that some are not always content that the person has made a spiritual or attitude change. It is because of their lack of understanding if the individual tells of their NDE experience that it is not all that

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

uncommon for relationships to become strained over sudden changes in the NDE survivor's new kinder disposition towards life.

Passing Through The Tunnel, The Light:

Many NDEers feel a sense of time standing still and they feel themselves being pulled towards a tunnel or spinning vortex that often illuminates an incredible white light, a brilliant white light that is far away yet up close and personal. The light encompasses the entire area the NDEer is in, yet it is part of the space of the NDEer, but not part of the person.

Case Study: Jeanette^{xxi}

Jeanette experienced her NDE in 1979 when she was 18 years of age. She developed a blood clot in her leg, which broke off and traveled to her lungs. Her doctors were certain that she would die and clinically she was pronounced dead. She remembered a bright light, but there was an incredible softness to the light. She felt herself floating above her body and looked down to see her body on the emergency room bed, she noticed the time of the clock as being 9:00 P.M.

She was able to see the ward of the hospital and several nurses in their activities. She felt at peace and she felt natural, though realizing she had physically died. She felt herself being drawn to the light at the entrance of a tunnel and suddenly felt the force of being pulled into this light and tunnel.

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The light that was at first at the top of the tunnel changed and now that same light was now present at the end of the tunnel and she was propelled towards it. She had only one desire and that was to reach the light at the end of the tunnel. Just when she felt she would achieve her goal, she heard a voice instruct her that it was not her time and she had to return to her body. She felt the impact of her return to her body.

When Jeanette awakened she remembered looking at the wall clock and saw that it was now 9:20 P.M, she had been died for 20 minutes. Physicians and nurses rushed around her amazed, for she had been in full cardiac arrest and the recorded time of her death was 9:00 P.M. However, later she lapse into a coma that lasted for several days and she has no recollection of that specific period of time, yet she clearly remembered the experience of when she died.

When she recovered she felt like she had been on her way to heaven and the light was her guide and guard, but at this time that she now recognized the voice that instructed her to return to her body, it was the voice of her deceased grandmother who died when she was in her childhood.

The normal description of the bright light that is often seen and experienced in a NDE is one in which the whiteness of the light is beyond human comprehension; the color is indescribable; there is no color of white earthly known to describe the brilliance of the light. Yet, the light in its brilliance does not hurt to look at nor is it the kind of light that makes one look away; in fact it is a drawing beckoning type of light that compels one to look at it and seek the comfort it appears to represent.

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▲ The light often emits and conveys feelings, such as a sense of security for it has a warm drawing power as if the knowledge of one's final destination or one's home journey end is either in or beyond the white light. A in a survey of 300 NDE survivors it was reported that 74.4 % surveyed felt as if they were traveling down a tunnel which had either darkness or other brilliant colors, but the sensation of moving forward to an end is consistent amount the NDEers.▲

Case Study: Eli^{xxii}

▲ NDEer Elli told the story of when she had a typical routine surgery and afterwards felt a terrible pain in her chest. She knew since she was a nurse that she was in serious trouble and could hear the activity in the operating room of emergency processes being put into to place. The pain intensified and suddenly she was out of her body and moving quickly towards a tunnel.

▲ She knew that she had left her body behind, yet she was at peace with the knowledge she was leaving the planet earth. She was not afraid and at the end of the tunnel there was a brilliant light that seemed to commutate acceptance to her, as if she had arrived finally to her destination, which was home. There were no words spoken yet she felt an entire life review and a keen sense of right and wrong.▲

▲ The light was communicating with her and she felt a loving patience. The light conveyed that she had a choice of whether to stay or come back to her body. She knew the light was Christ and the place she could stay was in heaven. She became all knowing and the communication was telepathic in nature. She wanted to stay but has some reservations and as soon as she thought about her reservations she was

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

immediately drawn back into the tunnel and felt the feeling of being sucked back into her body. ▲

▲ She found out after being unconscious for two days she had a massive heart attack and she was not expected to live. She now feels that she learned so much from death she wants to fully live her life and help others. She no longer has a fear of death and is convinced of her spiritual welfare.

Case Study: Johnny^{xxiii}

▲ Johnny has bronchial asthma and emphysema and he was scheduled for surgery the following week. John awoke in the hospital in severe pain and suddenly a large light appeared in his room in ceiling and he was no longer in pain and felt complete peace. He states that a voice spoke to him that said “come with me, I want to show you something”. He reached up and he felt drawn and knew he was leaving his body and going towards the ceiling. He felt himself transform into a spirit. He was able to see himself dead on his hospital bed. ▲

▲ The lights begin to move and he followed the light as it took him to the lower floor of the hospital, which he walked through doors and walls. He was traveling, yet he had no sensation of speed or time. He was taken to a recovery room and the light told him that he was going through this because he did not want him to be afraid of the day he would die, the day when his spirit passed for his body. The light brought john back through the hospital to his room and he was lead back to his body. He now had no fear of death.

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Encountering Deceased Relatives or FriendsCase Study: Vicki^{xxiv}

Vickie was born blind she has never seen colors or faces of anyone from her birth. She was a passenger in a horrible car accident and was brought in to the hospital with the doctors and nurses attempting to resuscitate her back to life. During this period she found herself floating above her body, looking down from the ceiling at the medical staff, with sense of time or urgency. She immediately recognized colors and was familiar with the sight her eyes were seeing though she had never seen them in her life time.

She saw a body on the table but at first did not recognize herself since she had never seen herself before, but she recognized her father's wedding ring, since it had orange blossoms on it she knew it was actually her body. She realized she was dead and that she was seeing her body.

She experienced a light and realized she was not spirit filled with light. She was taken by the light over the hospital and she saw things she had never seen before. She felt herself go down a tunnel moving towards and even bigger light. She was greeted by a warm light with music playing softly. She immediately became aware of two of her childhood friends that had died many years before when they were together in a elementary school for the blind.

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She noted not only were the girls' blind, but they had been profoundly retarded as well, yet they were sighted healthy and alive. They were no longer children, but adults and she knew them and they knew her. Next, she saw to of her childhood caretakers whom had previously died, and she saw and knew her grandmothers who has raised her and had only died two weeks ago. She recalls the feeling of love that was communicated without words spoken by mouth. She wanted to stay but a a figure that had the radiance of a million lights told her she had to return.

Case Study: Pam Reynolds^{xxxv}

Pam Reynolds, a county music recording star, she told her NDE to NDE researcher, while on tour in 1991, prompting a new record she suddenly lost her ability to talk. A MRI revealed an aneurysm on her brain stem. Without brain surgery she had no chance of living. She was placed in a state of Cardiac Standstill (CS), in which the body temperature is chilled to place her in a hypothermic state of 60 degrees. The operation required that all of her blood be filtered out of her body in order to complete the risky brain surgery. She was placed in a state clinically that was a close to death as possible without being declared dead. She was placed in the deepest form of an induced coma known to medical science.

She felt herself pop out of her body and found herself above her body looking down at the operating tables, where she could see at least 20 people attending her in surgery. She observed the saw-like equipment the surgeon was using to open up her head. She heard the conversations between the surgical nurse and her two surgeons working on her body.

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She noticed a tunnel in the room and she could see a bright light at the end of the tunnel. She moved towards the tunnel and met and chatted with her deceased grandmother for a long amount of time. She also spoke with her deceased uncle for a length of time. It was her grandmother who informed her that she had to lead her back to her body. Her grandmother and her uncle both escorted her back to her body, where she was suddenly back in and could hear music playing in the operating room.

The details that she supplied her physicians with concerning the conversations within the operating room and the instruments used was truth and it was verified by both surgeons and the other 20 people that were in attendance. Each surgeon informed her that they had no medical explanation for her experience, but conformed she was clinically dead while they performed surgery, her body was placed in a frozen state and her body temperature almost 40 degrees below normal, with no EEG readings and no cardiac readings, with no blood in her body, because all of her blood was drained out of her body and was being kept warmed in a Heart and Lung apparatus, to be transfused back into her body after surgery was complete. She did not get any heart beat or brain activity until her body temperature was raised to 88 degrees.

The details she supplied her family members about her deceased grandmother and uncle were astounding. Information that she did not know was revealed to her and verified by various family members. She knew information about her deceased relatives who had been dead many years that she could not have possibly known concerning their lives and experiences.

Life-Review

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

Many survivors experience during their NDE a review of their past life, from childhood through present time. The life-review is often seen as a slide show or even as a movie on a wall. These life-reviews normally consist of images from the past, significant events, emotions, sometimes pleasant scenes, sometimes unpleasant scenes, which involve the effects of their behavior or words, said to other individuals.

Many state they actually feel the pain that they have caused others in their lives. They have felt the emotion of the love they have given to others and the joy of live others have given to them in their life review. They see their triumphs and their failures, their good, bad, sweet and bitter that has been a part of their life journey.

Many NDEers feel that that they were not happy with some of their life-reviews, for it brought back memories of times they would have rather forgotten or pretended it never happened. However, the life-review has profound effects on their lives, mostly in a positive manner. In the below case study the life review from this NDE was profound and life changing.

Case Study: Dannion Brinkley^{xxvi}

Dannion Brinkley has one of the longest NDE that has ever in a medical setting been clinically documented. His experience lasted for 28 minutes, and at that particular time he was declared dead and his body sent to the hospital morgue. He was born and raised in South Carolina and knows that even as a child he was a hard hearted individual, for he was mean and he enjoyed playing the role of bully to others. He is aware that even in his early years he caused a great deal of pain to his family and

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others. He became a government assassin in the Marines and specialized in terrorist operation removals.

He was struck by lightning in 1975 in the neck, and declared dead on his arrival to the hospital. He felt himself floating above his body as he watched the paramedics try to resuscitate him. He watched as they finally gave up on him and there was nothing more they could do, he was dead. Above his body he saw a tunnel and the tunnel enclosed him; as he began to spin in the tunnel he heard bells and chimes ringing and he noticed a bright light at the end of the tunnel.

The light became brighter in color as he approached it and found himself standing in the mist facing the brightest light he had ever experienced. The intensity of the bright white light was profound, yet he could look into without hurting his eyes. He continued to stare at the light until he noticed a figure emerging from the light surrounded by a cloudy mist. He felt an intense love for the light and as the figure approached him, the sense of love was so overpowering he felt he could not contain all of emotions. This being that he saw, incased him inside of the light and he began to experience all that he had gone through during his life.

He emotionally felt every emotion in a life-review. Many things he saw in his life-review about himself were not pleasant to look at, and it very painful to comprehend. He began to realize how self-centered he was in his life and how harshly he had treated most people in his life.

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▲ He experienced the feelings of deep pain he had caused others in his lifetime. He had killed many enemies for the government to protect the American people and he felt the pain and confusion of the people whom he has killed and their feelings as they died. He felt the intense pain and grief of the relatives of those he murdered, and the effects of the loss of this person in their relative's lives.

▲ Dannion experienced the joy of the times he rarely gave love and when he received love. During his life-review there was no one to judge him. He judged himself based on his life and felt an overwhelming sense of remorse and repentance for the pain he had caused others. At the end of his life-review the person within the light returned and he felt even greater sorrow and shame of his life. He felt the being communicate telepathically to him that he was not whom God has made and that God was the first source of true love. As the being left him he felt his guilt and shame lift from his heart, for he knew that at that moment the being (Christ) had forgiven him of his sins.

The impact of his life-review was profound; it had really dawned on him his mistakes. After his realization of this life he remembered that he was dead and there was no way he could go back and change his ways and make amends to those he had hurt. He had not had much use for religion in his life, now he longed to have a chance to be with this person in the light that loved him. He felt that immediately he felt change inside of his soul, his heart felt as though it had melted and wanted to be loved, and he became sadden at the thought that a review of his life had come, but it was little too late; he was dead.

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He remembered feeling his self moving at a high rate speed, in which he viewed beautiful mountains, rivers and valleys. He remembers the lights, for there were now many lights all around surrounded by a beautiful mist. He saw many beautiful church cathedrals and he could see in them the many people that appeared to be glowing. He was shown events in his future and given instructions concerning his life of events and things he needed to do for his future.

He was instructed that he had to return to his body and instantly he suddenly was taken back in his body, which was an extremely painful process, he states "it felt like fire entering into ice". He immediately awakened and realized he was no longer in a hospital emergency room, but he was in a morgue and his body was cold completely covered from head to toe in a sheet. He was paralyzed from head to toe so he began to blow on the sheet. At this time a hospital orderly came into the morgue and noticed the sheet being blown and he was immediately rushed back to the emergency room where all of his vital signs were stabilized.

He remained paralyzed for a long period of time, although he eventually recovered and was forever changed by the event. He became the founder for Compassion in Action, an organization that trains and recruits individuals for hospice centers, in which he has spent thousands of hours himself by the bedside talking and comforting a person dying.

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

The Experience of Heaven

Heaven, biblically speaking is a promised place for Christians after death that believes in the Christ, as the Savior and God, the Father. Heaven is a reward for the earthly Christian faith, belief and the Christian service on the earth. Heaven is a reward that can only be obtained through the physical death of a believer. Heaven is a place, in which the Bible describes in details with promise, in many books of the Bible. Heaven is the Christian's hope, desire, want and our need in the Christian faith. In Philippians 3: 20 it states (NASB), *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"*^{xxvii}

The Bible also references the joy and beauty of heaven through-out the Bible. In Revelation 21:3-7 (ASB) it states, *"And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and he will dwell among them, and they shall be His people and God Himself will be among them, and he will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be morning or crying, or pain, the first things have passed away. And He who sits on the throne said 'behold, I am making all things new. And He said, Write, for these words are faithful and true. Then he said to me, It is done, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, for I will give to the one who thirst from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and He will be My Son"*

Heaven, the city of gold, light and love; it is the hope of what is yet to come, for believers. Many Christians have reconciled themselves to the fact that one at a time we are all simply a time away from dying. Death is not feared for many Christians, such as

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myself have a steadfast desire, hope and expectancy to be with the Lord one day in heaven. The Scriptures assures us as Christians in 2 Corinthians 5: 6-8(NASB) that *"Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-for we walk by faith and not by sight-we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be home with the Lord"*^{xxviii}

The NDE story of Pastor Steve Sjorgen^{xxix} is an example of meeting with the Lord after his clinical physical death. Steve was admitted to the hospital for gallbladder surgery only to go into cardiac arrest during his surgery. At the time of his cardiac arrest he felt his spirit being pulled out of his body. He was aware of the doctors working frantically on his body attempting to restart his heart. He watched from above as his heart flat-lined on the monitor screen and alarm buttons begin to blare, singling he had died. During the seven minutes his heart had officially stopped.

He floated upwards and He met Christ and Christ communicated with him and informed him that he was granting him a new life and how he wanted his life to change. Christ gave him life-altering messages for his new life and his ministries. He describes the serenity and the complete sense of love and peace he experienced in the presence of the Savior and the beauty of his surroundings, he knew him as a pastor had achieved the reward of the final race, he had made it to heaven. However, he was informed that he could not stay, for it was not his time; he had much work in the ministry to do on earth.

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He felt himself return to his body and he could see he was totally spiritually aware of what was going on around him even though his eyes were closed he could see and saw much of the activities of his resuscitation. They were able to restart his heart and clearly remembered his visit to heaven, which served to strengthened and intensify his faith and his pastoral ministry.

Case Study: ^{xxx}Arthur Yensen

In 1932 Arthur Yensen, a young graduate student in Chicago, was unemployed and decided to travel, leaving the city to head out west seeking employment. He bummed a ride from a man headed to Minnesota. In route there was in a car accident, in which he was severely hurt, unconscious, and unresponsive. He felt that he was leaving the earth and he begin to see great beauty around him, such as mountains with snow-capped vivid colors; he viewed slopes and foliage that was indescribable with beauty. He had amplified sight, for he was able to see from far distanced in detail any scenery regardless of how far away it appeared.

He viewed lakes that contained different kinds of water, such as clear water, gold water, shimmering water that seemed to possess a human quality wanting one to admire and enjoy the site and welcoming of the sites seemed to silently project to the viewer. The land was covered in a spectacular grass, with luxuriant trees, which glowed and shimmered.

He begins to see people all happy singing, dancing, holding hands. He saw men, women and children. The people begin to come towards him to greet him and

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

welcome him. Their bodies appeared to be perfect and weightless. They were dressed very simply clothed by animal skins. He was informed by the eldest person in the group as a man that he had now entered into the land of the dead. He explained that him that as a spirit everyone lived in peace and homey just as the Bible said they would. He immediately begin to no longer feel like a stranger, he begin to remember that heaven was his first home.

He noticed a bright light coming towards him and he felt the overwhelming presence of God. He felt unworthy to address him, but he felt unspeakable joy and love. The Lord began to speak to him silently and he felt his mind expanding with vast knowledge. He was informed everything was holy and indescribable in heaven and God was Lord. Yensen had rejected religion in his lifetime and he felt that his whole heart had changed. He observed the animals, for they only ate grass and his desire was to stay in the beautiful place with God. No one aged in heaven, no elements broke down or degraded everything remained in perfection without changing.

However, he was informed he had to return to earth that there was important work for him to do and he had to return to do the work given to him. He was informed he that the world would undergo great confusion and the people would need him to turn to. God promised him that when his work was done he would return back to heaven and all he had seen would be waiting on him.

He was sent back to his body and awakened after doctors thought he would never regain consciousness. This event altered his life, his thinking, his motives, and his goals. He later became a public speaker, educator and civil rights fighter for various

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ances and organizations. He shared his NDE with his students and taught them that his experience was proof that life has an ordained purpose. He died in 1992.

The Learning of Special Knowledge or Advice Given

In many NDE experiences many individuals have reported receiving special knowledge or instructions from a voice heard or by a person in their experience. The information normally either addresses a particular life concern or prophetic future message.

Case Study: Diane^{xxxi}

Diane, began in her mid-life having a problem of waking up after she fell asleep at night. She had lately begun to sleep setting up instead of sleeping in the bed, since she had so much trouble waking up from sleep. She was not aware that she had a leaking gas pipe in her house from the gas radiator.

During the time of one of her sleep attacks she found herself having a conversation face to face with her deceased grandmother, who had died 3 years earlier. Her grandmother told her that she was going to die, she had to wake up immediately and follow her it was necessary for survival.

It was at that time that she realized she was no longer in her body and she and her grandmother were spirits talking together. She turned around and looked at her body sitting still on couch. She followed her grandmother. She remember the intense feelings of peace and love. She had no fear or apprehension meeting two other spirit persons as they joined her and her grandmother on their walk.

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Diane was informed that her life was in danger and she had died but it wasn't the right time for she had great work that had to be done on earth and she would have to make a choice, of whether to stay in the spirit through death or return to her natural body and live. The choice was being left to her to decide and God would honor her choice. The information she received was profound coming from her grandmother, who was speaking with her about her life and future goals.

Diane ultimately made the choice to go back to her body and choose to do the work that was handed out to her for the future. She remember being told that she needed to now take a two deep breaths, which she did and she was suddenly awake back in her body sitting up. It was, discovered that the gas leak in her home was at a potentially fatal level and it was a miracle that she lived. She states "the experience taught me that everything is known. At the time I did not feel it was important to ask anything. God has made it so will know everything when we die".

When The NDE Experience Is Not Positive It Becomes a Unpleasant Nightmare

You have read many spiritually uplifting NDEs; however, there is a flip side to a heavenly experience that most who have experienced a NDE have spoken about there is the other 3% experience who experience a nightmarish or dark trip to hell. Not everyone has a spiritual awakening; not everyone has a glimpse of heaven, not

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everyone has a sense of calm and peace. There is a small percentage of NDE survivors that tell a different story, one of demons, darkness, confusion and of hell.

The Bible speaks of hell as being a place of eternal torture. Hell is a place which it is filled with demons and the leader of hell is arch enemy of God, the Angel Lucifer. In the Bible the term hell, hades, and the abysses' bring fear to most Christian's heart. These are terms that speak of darkness, fear, pain, suffering, punishment, demonic spirits, and separation for anything that is good in life as we know it. We do not think of sunshine, but of midnight; we do not think of healing, but of physical pain; we do not think of family being with us; we cringe at the thoughts of others we love being in a dark, cold, forbidden place. The Bible is clear on its stance concerning the promised separation from the Father and the place called hell.

The Bible states in Matthew 7:13 (NIV), "You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way". In Matthew 10:28 (NIV) it states "And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell". In 2Peter 2:4 (NIV) it states "For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell, in gloomy pits of darkness, where they are being held until the Day of Judgment". This is where the imagination can run wild and fear intensify as we imagine a place of such great evil and fallen angels doing the bidding of a master demonic force, Satan. The concept of dying and being sent the hell is a road block, danger sign, and flashing red light, for Christians to avoid this judgment

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in death, therefore being careful to sustain one's salvation till the soul leaves the body in death, in order to avoid a judgment by Christ of hell.

The media has taken biblical Scripture and created movies such as the Exorcist, Seven Passages to Hell, and many more that actually portray a place of human suffering and unbearable pain, a place where it is possible to return from or change. Those whose judgment is being cast into hell, by Christ can never be returned; for once in hell there is no ladder or exit sign to get out. The Bible gives a vivid description of the judgment of hell. In Matthew 13:42 (NIV) it states "And shall cast then unbelievers) into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth".

The Book of Revelation 20:14-15 (NIV) it states "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire". This is a horrible description of darkness, fire, heat, and pain, which is the end results of those that have rejected the salvation of Christ, which He offers as Himself to each person as a Personal Savior. However, to take it a descriptive step further in the Book of Mark 9:44 (NIV) it states "Where their worms die not, and the fire is not quenched". Hell is a place in which most feel nightmares are born and eternal judgment proclaimed. It is the focus of the Christian to avoid being sentenced to hell.

However, there are many non-believers and skeptics of spirituality or Christianity and their views of hell are of a world displaced in a physical sense. There are individuals that believe that hell is simply a translational state of mind, or that hell is simply what we presently make of our lives today, for hell is on earth already by the way

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we live. There are others that feel hell is a mental punishment for those who do not get what they want, the desire to have materialistic things and not possess them.

Individuals that do not believe in the Lord, do not believe that there is a hell or that there is heaven, it is merely mythological hogwash and propaganda meant to control a particular society. But it is through several NDS that we learn the reality of hell, the trip there out of body, and the journey back to the body.

The following NDEs, individuals who have experienced what may be termed as the dark side of hell or the promised dark abysses, often in brilliant detail they tell their story, for they have lived to tell their stories. These stories are not pleasant to read

Hell and Back

Case Study: Rev. Howard Storm^{xxxii}

Rev. Howard Storm is a Professor of Art at Northern Kentucky University and he admits that he was not a pleasant man to be around. He was avid atheist and he was very hostile to every form of religion of those who practiced any form of organized religion. He admitted to using his rage and temper as a calculated rousé to control others, and he seldom found any joy or beauty in life.

On June 1, 1985 at the age of 38, Howard Storm suffered a perforation of his stomach and in clinical terms died. He remembers wanting to tell his wife that he loved

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her and wanted her to listen, but he could not talk. His next memory is of him standing by his bed looking down at his body on the bed. He first thought that it was a bad dream, until he realized he was not dreaming; he was actually dead.

Death was not what Howard Storm thought it would be like, for there was no fanfare, no bright lights, no magnificent ascending into some mystical realm. He found himself strangely disappointed, that the nonsense of Christian believers did not occur to him, even though he was a non-believer.

He began to struggle and fight with many horrific creatures, whom were clawing at him and hitting him with blows that he physically felt the pain. The horrible looking and smelling creatures begin to humiliate him by calling him names and tearing off pieces of his flesh. He noticed that the creatures seemed to be under the command of a higher evil-being and there was some type of satanic hierarchy. The taller demons were physically aggressive, while the larger demons stood guard and watch the havoc the little demons created. He noticed that no matter how much he fought back the creatures were immune to any type of pain. It was only when he became exhausted from fighting the creatures, they told him that he was no longer worth having fun and due to their boredom they were leaving. As he lay on the ground with an occasional creature walking by and laughing at this particular state, voices begin to speak to him, instructing him to pray to the Lord.

Howard was a devout atheist and did not know how to pray, even in his state of helplessness and respire, he did not think of God as a first initial thought. He began to

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think of the only Scripture he ever knew, which is the Psalms 25 was and he started to repeat the words of the Psalm.

He was shown somewhat of a mirror which showed earth and people going about their normal day routines s amiss to know that demons moved freely about them. These demons were in all shapes and sizes and could move at will he knew they were restless evil spirits whose jobs were to destroy others through violence, addictions and depression. He learned that there were specific demons for specific situations; there were demons of lust; demons of addictions; demons of pornography; demons of violence; demons of mental distress; and demons that specifically preyed on young children and teenagers.

When he began to speak the name of the Lord, the demonic creatures begin to scream and started begging him to stop speaking the name of the Lord. He immediately knew they were terrified of the name of the Lord. He started to pray and the demons rebuked for him for praying and started chanting together that there was no God, yet he continued pray and to repeat the Psalm and soon all of the creatures were gone, running as if there was something powerful chasing them away.

He felt as though he was torn apart and beginning to sink lower into darkness as though he was being pulled further down. The only Christian song he knew was "Yes, Jesus Loves Me", and he begin to sing this song. As he sang this song something in his heart opened up and he begin to beg Jesus to save him. As he screamed and begged Christ for salvation he begin to see a little light appear it got larger and brighter the closer it got to him.

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When the light reached him, it surrounded him like an embrace and he could see his wounds and brokenness melt away and “he became whole in the radiance of the Lord”. He begin to cry tears of joy, for he was feeling things inside of his heart he had never felt before, such as joy, love, peace, the need to love others and the need to want to be loved by others. He knew he had an encounter with Jesus and the result was that he received more love than he ever imagined existed.

The light begin to lift him out of darkness and he could feel himself traveling very fast and he could make out various stars and galaxies until they came to a huge radiance that was surrounded by millions of light. He felt ashamed to have seen heaven, for he was a great sinner and he pleaded out of shame to be sent back to the dark pit he was found in by Jesus. He told Jesus that He had made a mistake to choose Him and the Lord reassured him that He did not make mistakes.

Jesus called forth his angels and suddenly he was surrounded by many angels. He begin to cry at the beauty of the angels they begin to speak to his mind, and he begin to see colors he had never seen in his life, and notice how easily and clearly he ,Jesus, and His angels communicated with each other without speaking a word out loud. He noticed that Jesus was supporting him and that Jesus had not taken His hands off of him since they met.

He was shown his life from beginning to end, some events were quick in their showing other events moved very slowly. He saw how he had worked for self-exhalation and had gained nothing. He began to feel the angels sorrow as they to watched his life flash before his eyes. The angels rejoiced when he showed kindness

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and love, which was rare and they cried harder at the people he had deliberately hurt in his lifetime. He saw that he had been a manipulator of people, in order to achieve his personal career goals. He saw how he practiced looking compassionate and not feeling anything, but contempt for the person who asked him for help.

The angels pointed out that when he was little he felt victimized because his own father was career driven and had no time for him, and this caused him to become vindictive, hateful and angry as a way of punishing his father. He finally understood that he had been hurt and he wanted to hurt others and this is what he had spent a lifetime of doing, never really believing that he could be loved. This was the reason he had rejected Christianity, not because he did not believe there is a God in heaven, but that he could not force himself to believe that someone called Father God could love him and not know him and his own father knew him and did not show love to him.

He was given the opportunity to return to his body and begin a new life. He settled back into his body and awoke. What had seemed like days and hours had actually taken less than 20 minutes. He became a follower of the Lord, denouncing his Atheist views and mannerism. He began to show genuine love and work for his family and the church. He made amends asking for forgiveness to many he had hurt. He felt like he had a new lease of life and that life could not possibly be enjoyed with the having the salvation of the Lord in one's life. He is no longer afraid of death for he understands that is a penalty for not loving the Lord and that hell is a very real place. However, heaven is real and it is the Individual that has to want salvation enough to take Christ

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hand in order to be award heaven. He has written a book about his experiences and continues to speak of his new spiritual life since his experience.

Case Study 2: George Ritchie

In December of 1943 George Ritchie died of pneumonia and minutes after he died. This is the NDE that had the profound effect on Dr. Raymond Moody and facilitated his life research into NDE experience. He was a army private and was declared officially dead for nine minutes.

George remembered leaving his body and standing by his bed, but he did not recognize the body he saw was his own. He felt himself flying to a new city and it was then he realized that he was no longer solid. He decided to fly back to the hospital and see his body.

He remembered a voice asking him what had he done with his life for himself and for others. It was then he realized that he was being judged not by Jesus, but by himself. The Lord gave him a tour of four dimensions in the afterlife. They begin to fly to a large city on Earth and he saw many assembly-line workers at work. He saw a woman that was desperately trying to obtain cigarettes from the worker, only to know she had died of cancer due to her cigarette addiction.

He was sent to a house and he saw a boy in spirit form following behind a girl, in which he was begging for forgiveness of his sins. He knew that this boy had committed suicide and was chained to the consequences in his life. He witnessed a bar of sailors in which he saw demons appear unnoticed by anyone in the mist of the sailors. He

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knew these were demon spirits of past individuals who had died of alcohol poison and they were looking for new bodies to enter into. He witnessed a demon entering into a drunken sailor's body causing his behavior to become obnoxious and belligerent.

Jesus continued to show him a dimension of angry spirits all locked in hand-to-hand combat with each other's. It was then that he realized he was seeing hell and its inhabitants. There were demons and foul spirits arguing with each other over politics and religion, in which they would try to kill the other when there was a disagreement. He witnessed spirits who were locked in earthly desires that went beyond the physical world which they could never be satisfied in life.

He was taken to a room that was an enormous library with millions of huge volumes of books and he was informed by Jesus these were the books kept on people who were selfish, while on Earth, they were in hell. He was still in hell with Jesus, and he was informed by Christ that as they walked no spirit or demon could see them as they journeyed through hell.

He found himself in the air again, this time he was taken to a city of millions of brilliant lights set up similar to the city described in the Book of Revelation. He was told that the city was for those that believed and love was the focus of their life on Earth. He realized he was actually seeing heaven, but he was not allowed to go into heaven, and immediately he was returned back to his body. He later understood a profound sense of knowledge about death, he states "Death is nothing more than a doorway, something you walk through". He had seen hell and heaven and knew that both places existed and

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where a person was placed was dependent on the life they lived and the love they gave to others, the way Christ has given already to each person on Earth.

Suicide and The NDE

The topic of suicide is a taboo topic among most individuals. Spiritually, the majority of the Christian population there is a division as to what happens to the soul when one voluntary takes their life. Many Christians believe that the biblical Commandment found in Exodus 20:13 (NIV) "*thy shall not kill*" is a commandment which governs over one's own body, as well as it governs over individuals who commit murder.

Therefore the general Christian belief is that there is a punishment of hell, for individuals that commit suicide or murder. This thinking can often be a source of a spiritual family pain for families that have experienced suicide in or among their family members. Many Christians would like to believe that individuals that have committed suicide are mentally ill and therefore God has made a provision for these individuals and it is yet in His mysterious way He extends His grace over the situation.

Biblical Stance NDE and Suicide

The Bible is silent when it comes to the subject of suicide and it does not specifically use the term suicide or state that it is a sin to take one's own life. The Christian church over the years has considered suicide a moral sin. There are some denominations that even refuse to bury individuals who have committed suicide in their church crematory.

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Suicide is a controversial topic, but the Bible has several instances which occurred during the Old Testament, that suicide was a given option or command. For example there are several key biblical figures in the Bible, which suicide was the choice they made for specific reasons and some of those reasons were to edify or bring righteousness for the Lord. Below are several verses that reference biblical to actual suicides or individuals who have contemplated committing suicide or dying due to their extreme emotional despair:

1. Moses in Numbers 11:12-15 (NIV) was in despair because of the complaints of the Israelites he was leading. His burden was so heavy that he asked God *"if You treat me like this, please kill me here and now..."*
2. Elijah in 1 King 18:40 and 19:4 (NIV) ran for his life to Beersheba into the wilderness and he *"prayed that he might die."* He stated *"it is enough! Now, Lord to take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"*
3. Samson in Judges 16:29-30, who was blinded and humiliated by his Philistine captives, collapsed the temple upon himself, killing thousands in the process.
4. Saul in 1 Samuel 31:4-6 fell on his sword during battle because he was afraid of the abuse he would receive at the hands of his enemies, once he was captured and his Amor Bearer followed suit and did the same.
5. Ahithophel in 2 Samuel 17, hung himself as he had experienced great public humiliation when his advice was rejected.
6. Abimelech in 2 Samuel 17 asked his Armor bearer to kill him with a sword, because he was afraid he would be humiliated and killed by a woman.

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The question that is being asked is what type of Near-Death- Experiences and what are the results of these experiences when an individual has committed suicide, but is not successful. Below I will present a case study of two individuals that attempted suicide and the NDE that resulted from the act itself, since they survived:

Case Study 1: Sandra Rogers^{xxxiii}

On April 30, 1976 Sandra attempted to commit suicide by taking an overdose. When that did not work she took a .38 caliber pistol and aimed it at her heart and pulled the trigger. She immediately found herself in the presence of a great light instead of the "nothingness" she expected to have in death. The light was warm and she could feel love illuminating from the light.

She watched her life unfold in front of her eyes. She could see and feel the emotions of loved ones that had touched her life. She had an inept knowledge of their thoughts, their pains. She had gained incredible insights towards the actions they had taken for or against her in her life. She witnessed the pain she caused in her life. She felt broken for she was a woman that had been married and divorced three times by the age of twenty-five. She thought the fact that she had attempted suicide by overdose at least 6 times in her life.

Spiritually she was in so much pain not just due to failed marriages, but because over the course of the marriages she had several miscarriages. She felt that God had denied her the chance to ever have a family of her own. Therefore, she had a long-standing resentment towards God. She felt that there was no way that a loving God

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could permit all of these horrific acts in her life and love her. She felt that God was selfish and unfair to her life. She felt that God hated her for some specific reason that was unknown to her mind. However, as she felt the pain of her past life, she realized that in the light she was surrounded by this love was not condemning but understanding to her pain. She understood the reasoning behind every event in her life, for she had unlimited understanding in the presence of the light.

She was given the choice by the light that communicated with her through her mind to remain, but it was the desire of the light that she return to life and work through all the things that had brought her to the point of taking her life. She was told that one day she would have a family that will love her and she was given insight to help others that were in pain. However, she was warned that all the information given to her would leave her and only what was necessary to sustain her would be kept in her memory.

She was given an angel guide escort on the way back to her body. Though she did not die the effect of her NDE brought peace and understanding spirituality to her life. She states she learned many things about God and love. Below are a few references to what she discovered in her suicide NDE:

1. Our soul is a part of God and God is a part of each person
2. It is necessary to have hardships in life, in order to grow and form a dependency on God
3. The physical body is chosen for each person prior to conception
4. Hell is eternal, spiritual and mentally
5. Hell is a place of judgment and it will keep a person away from God

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6. Hell is a state that totally devoid of any type of love, it is desolate
7. There are no secrets in the afterlife and the entire universe is God's church
8. God is love, energy, light and His love is absolute perfection

Needless to state, Sander Rogers is an advocate for Christianity and instrumental in helping others in despair to seek the Lord. She is the co-author of a NDE book entitled *Lessons from the Light*.^{xxxiv}

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Case Study 2: Nadia McCaffrey^{xxxv}

Nadia, as a child had experiences a NDE and remembers that she did not want to return back from the heavenly realm she found herself in, but reluctantly returned back to her body. Throughout her childhood she was perceived as a beautiful happy child and many did not understand that despite her intelligence and beauty, that by the age of 15 despite she did not want to be alive.

She often on purpose hurt others and pushed away attempts of individuals getting to close to her. While she was the most popular girl at her school she was emotionally in great despair and turmoil. She rebelled by fighting in school and fighting her family verbally at home. She was so full of resentments, because after having

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experienced her NDE at age 7, she simply wanted to die and return to the love and peace she was surrounded in when she had her childhood NDE.

Her need to go back to heaven was so obsessive that in 1960 she attempted suicide. She took a large amount of pharmaceutical drugs that her grandmother had in her medicine cabinet. She swallowed the contents of 15 bottles of pills; she wanted to make sure that there was no chance of her survival or her return from death. However, her family found her and she was revived back to health in a hospital and referred to a psychiatrist facility for supervision. She was depressed she had failed to die, but vowed that she would see death soon.

A few months after her suicide attempt Nadia again attempted suicide; she had a better plan. She planned on taking a large dose of prescription drugs that belonged to her deceased grandmother, which had been left behind in her medicine cabinet. This time would be different for she had studied the medications and learned the correct dosage to take, which would insure her death. However, a girlfriend of Nadia came to her house unexpectedly and discovered her unconscious on the bed, dressed in a beautiful gown ready for death. She was not breathing and only had the faintest detection of a pulse. She was immediately rushed to the hospital.

She remembered being suddenly out of her body watching her body watching her body being wheeled into the emergency room. She watched for a while outside of her body as the nurses and doctors frantically worked to revive her. She had heard the doctor say there was nothing else she could do and they begin the process of disconnecting the various life support tubing they had attached to her body.

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She found herself in a dark tunnel and she was anticipating the light, but instead as she walked through the dark tunnel she was told by a loud voice that she had to go back because she had work to do. She began to feel herself sliding backwards and she could not stop the moment. The next memory Nadia has is being brought into consciousness and the realization of terrible pain and extreme sadness. She noticed the nurses crying, because they thought she was dead. She had no heart beat for 10 minutes. It was after that time period that they felt a heartbeat and begin their efforts again to revive her back to life.

She found herself once again very depressed, because she had failed once again to achieve permanent residency in the light and be loved. She felt a deep sense of despair and isolation. However, in time she began to relive her experience and realized that God had purpose for her life and she would have to grow up and accept her Godly responsibility. She stopped fighting against the world and began to spiritually grow and her goal was to pass on the love she had felt from her previous NDE when she was 7 years old to others in pain. Nadia's suicidal thoughts and desire to die left her as she became spiritually whole, knowing she had a purpose and that God had a plan for her life to help others.

Nadia has dedicated her life to working with the terminally ill by helping them make the transition from life to death with love.

The After Effects of an NDE^{xxxvi}

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A Glimpse Into Eternity: Religious and Scientific Research of The Near-Death-Experience

We have read many case histories of individuals having NDEs and the general consensus of these individuals are that there were monumental effects psychologically and spiritually to their lives after these events have occurred. These effects have been turning points in their lives. The effects which are generally positive have affected the way they think, their behavior, their spirituality, and has been instrumental in the developed them into a better person with either increased faith or new faith in God.

In general, people who have had an NDE tend to be reserved in speaking about them. They are a very private and intimate experience for people that are not readily shared with others. 67% of the United States population believes in life after death (Gallup, 1982). However, just the mention of having had such an experience can exert a great deal of public pressure on the experiencer.

When someone identifies himself or herself as having a NDE, the public tends to react in one of two ways. Either the experiencer is not believed outright and thought to be hallucinating, lying, or the public attributes some type of supernatural power to the experiencer and thus attributes to them with unrealistic expectations to live up to wisdom or some type of sainthood.

When the experiencer fails to live up to the expectations, he or she may experience rejection from those who put them up on the pedestal in the first place. In either case, when near-death experiences come forward to relate their stories, they open themselves up to experiencing un-welcomed and non-supportive public critics response.

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According to the literature research, all of the NDE research authors agree that it is common for NDE survivors experience sweeping changes in attitude and behavior after a near-death experience. Often, they will undergo an expanded belief in spirituality and God, feel a sense of direction in their lives, and allow a sense of unconditional love to rule their decisions in life (Harris & Bascom, 1990^{xxxvii}). The changes that the NDE survivors go through can be very frightening for their family and friends (Harris & Bascom, 1990). These changes can be abrupt and disruptive to the lives of those who have had a near-death experience.

An NDE can even cause a "spiritual crisis" for those who are not prepared for such spiritual growth at that time in their lives. This study also brings focus to the sense of special "wisdom" that a person may feel when they return to their bodies having had a NDE. It inquires into the nature of this wisdom and asks whether common themes are reported by different subjects.

Scientific Clinical Research

The actual number of ways people die is surprisingly small. According to medical experts there are only three ways of dying. The first is asphyxiation. Unconsciousness and death are caused by imperfect oxidation in the blood, or rather a lack of oxygen. The second is by syncope. This is a sudden death from an accident or blood clot. It is a very fast way of dying. The third and final way death comes upon us is through the breakdown of vital organs or function. This is a slow and lingering process for death any one of these categories may trigger NDEs.

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Scientist both clinical and psychological all agree that death brings with it a sense of powerlessness that can be terrifying in our present day culture. It is such a fear that is only made worse or is intensified by the culture's current scientific, linear thinking, which requires us to distance ourselves from what we want to know in order to understand it. This form of thinking removes that which we want to know, death, from its natural context is part of our daily lives.

We have a tendency to compartmentalize death thus in turn; we remove death from its natural context in life in order to understand it, it is reduced to mere clinical definitions. We cannot understand life if we cannot accept death. We struggle to understand life outside of the physical realm that we have become accustomed to in our bodies.

The science community places itself in a mindset of logical analyses and veers away from the supernatural or the religious aspects. By doing so scientific thinking has actually removed and drawn definite lines for death which easily separates the reality of death from our daily lives, so we do not have to wonder about what we cannot understand, the NDE experience.

Below are the results of several NDE scientific studies that have been conducted concerning the NDE. The first set of studies takes the pro-stance that NDEs do occur in individuals and the NDE is an actual real event and the encounters are indeed encounters with spiritual supernaturalism. The second set of studies are based on the scientific clinical research, in which the medical profession in their testing have what they feel as clear and logical reasons for NDE experience and that the spiritual event is

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a camouflaged illusion, due to explainable medical circumstances, in which the hypothesis is to prove that there is a clinical explainable reason and NDE are none existent or can be clinically induced or explained.

The NDE not only affects the lives of those who have undergone or had such an experience, but it affects the lives and often touches those with whom they have come in contact as well. Through their experiences, we may learn to grow and understand our world and ourselves and our individual, cultural, and reflect upon our spirituality.

The Dying or Injured Brain Theories^{xxxviii}

This research theory was popularized by Dr. Susan Blackmore in her book Dying To Live.^{xxxix} She speaks of the brain being an organ and the NDE is not a real experience, but the results of one's brain being deprived of oxygen. It is not because of unique spiritual experience but due to the brain's neurotransmitters shutting down and causing an induced illusion for those that are close to death. The NDE is merely a common series.

Scientist speculate that the brain when in the process of dying secrete endorphins, which are hormones which act on the central nervous system, which suppresses pain and in turn the endorphins create a dream like state that many science researchers believe to be what is known as an NDE. It is believed that it is the same thing that happens to athletics that are injured or individuals that are accidents that their body has become traumatized. It is the body's way of escaping pain and shutting down to make the dying process as easy as possible.

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Many scientists believe that individuals that are close to death the body begins to regenerate and are jolted back to full function; it is the remembrance of the brain's takeover of the endorphins or lack of oxygen (Anoxia) that produces the false memory^d.

Dr. Ronald Siegel Medical Clinical Professor at the University of Arkansas believes that the specific endorphin called Ketamine, and it is released when a person is close to death. He states he has been able in his clinical research using volunteers to bring individuals to this state and in turn create a NDS in the research lab.

Another theory about individuals near death producing a false NDE is through a type of epilepsy episode that is commonly associated with temporal lobe damage to the brain. Research scientists have reported that by electrically stimulating this lobe they can mimic some elements of the NDES. The individuals that have been used in the study have experienced many similarities of the NDE to support the fact that NDEs are merely induced chemical reactions or a haywire of electrical impulses firing off in a dying brain.

These results were reported by the research volunteers in a medical clinical setting, in which the commonality is that each of the volunteer have suffered strokes in the Temporal Lobe have experienced similarities of the NDE experience:

1. The sensation of leaving one's body
2. An acute sense of one's past life passing before their eyes
3. A sensation of a bright light surrounding their body or in the room

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On September 17, 2008, in the United Kingdom hospital doctors from Cambridge University Hospital studied 1,500 heart attack patients through –out 25 major hospitals, who survived their heart attacks. In a 3 year research which was coordinated by South Hampton University (U.K.), they set out to determine if people that are without a heartbeat or brain activity can actually have a “out of body experience”. The study, known as AWAreness during Resuscitation^{xli}, involves the collaboration of 25 major medical centers through Europe.

Dr. Sam Parenia Intensive Care physician and lead researcher stated that the following finding^{xlii}

“If you can demonstrate that consciousness continues after the brain switches off, it allows for the possibility that the consciousness as a separate entity. This is a mystery that we can now subject to scientific study. Contrary to popular perceptions, death is not a specific moment. It is a process that begins when the heart stops beating, the lungs stop working and the brain ceases functioning, which is a medical condition called Cardiac Arrest. But what is happening to the individual at that time? What's really going on? Because there is a lack of blood flow, the cells go into a kind of frenzy to keep themselves alive. And within about 5 min. or so they start to damage or change. After an hour or so the damage is so great that even if we restart the heart again and pump blood, the person can no longer be viable, because the cells have just been changed too much. And then the cells continue to change so that within a couple of days the body actually decomposes. During a Cardiac Arrest, all three criteria of death are present. There then follows a period of time, which may last from a few seconds to an hour or more, in which emergency medical efforts may succeed in restarting the heart and reversing the dying process. What people experience during this period of Cardiac Arrest provides a window of understanding what it is to experience the dying process.”

The AWAreness Project has proven that the brain even near death is still in a state of consciousness. However, the outcome of the study emphasizes there is no measurable scientific data to support true validity to the NDE state. The study

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reduplicated the NDE experience that volunteers subjected themselves to, in order to show that a patient who is medically induced by drugs to the point of the slowed heart rate, very shallow breathing and low level brain waves that have been manipulated to slow down to a bear minimal of function; placing the volunteer a small few steps away from clinical death. The NDE experience can be brought to light and experienced by the patient volunteer.

They were successful in 21% of the patients, which stated that they had a NDE experience from the experiment and as a concluded result it was felt that there was no validity of the spiritual experience inducing a NDE. However, the study does conquer that greater studies are needed and there is still the small probability that one's conscious perception of one's consciousness at the point of death can be altered by the individuals root perception of oneself being a spiritual universal being, and this may possibly have a spiritual effect on the process of death.

Medical and Scientific Research that Support the NDEs

Cardiologist, Dr. Michael Sabom^{xliii}, M.D., and NDE Researcher, whose first book, *Recollections of Death*, is considered to be a landmark study in the field of near-death research. He is one of the leading authorities with over twenty year's current research expertise in the field of NDE. In 1994, he founded the *Atlanta Study*, which was one of the first comprehensive investigations of its kind into the subject of NDEs. Its purpose was to document the life-and-death dramas played out in operating rooms and patients in the hospital to test their validity.

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He was interested in the simultaneous events unseen by medical personnel, but has been reported with clarity and conviction by nearly 170 individuals who have experienced a cardiac arrest NDE and have returned from death's door to detail the experience. Dr. Sabom's latest book, *Light and Death*, shares his findings from what was termed as *The Atlanta Study*.

Dr. Sabom is a born-again Christian; he has scrutinized NDEs in light of what the Bible has to say about death and dying; he explores the realities of light and darkness, and the connection with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Below are the statistics findings from Dr. Sabom's *Atlanta Study* when taken from a diverse religious sector of individuals.

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS					
	Conservative Christian NDEers (22 persons)	Liberal Christian NDEers (13 persons)	God-believer NDEers (12 persons)	Cardiac patients NDEers (32 persons)	Random Cardiac NDEers (81 persons)
AGE (mean years)	52	54	52	62.7	58.6
SEX					
Male	36%	62%	25%	81%	56%
Female	64%	38%	75%	19%	44%
RACE (White)	91%	100%	100%	100%	99%
EDUCATION (mean years)	13.4	15.2	14.7	14.5	14.4
OCCUPATION	-	-	-	-	-

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<u>Professional</u>	<u>9%</u>	<u>62%</u>	<u>33%</u>	<u>47%</u>	<u>32%</u>
<u>Clerical-Sales</u>	<u>64%</u>	<u>38%</u>	<u>67%</u>	<u>19%</u>	<u>59%</u>
<u>Laborer-Svcs</u>	<u>27%</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34%</u>	<u>9%</u>
FUNCTIONAL CLASS (1)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>			<u>-</u>
<u>I.</u>	<u>63%</u>	<u>83%</u>	<u>92%</u>	<u>87%</u>	<u>72%</u>
<u>II.</u>	<u>32%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>8%</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>21%</u>
<u>III.</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>-</u>			<u>7%</u>
YEARS POST-NDE (mean)	<u>12.7</u>	<u>15.5</u>	<u>10.4</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
PRESENT RELIGION	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Protestant</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Catholic</u>	<u>96%</u>	<u>77%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>81%</u>	<u>69%</u>
<u>Jewish</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>15%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>9%</u>	<u>17%</u>
<u>Other or</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>9%</u>
<u>None</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>8%</u>	<u>58%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>5%</u>
HOGGE'S INTRINSIC RELIGIOSITY (mean)	<u>36.1</u>	<u>28.2</u>	<u>25.1</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>27.8</u>
CHURCH ATTENDANCE (mean)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Childhood</u>	<u>1.27</u>	<u>1.23</u>	<u>1.42</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<u>Before NDE</u>	<u>2.14</u>	<u>2.23</u>	<u>3.25</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<u>Present</u>	<u>1.32</u>	<u>2.08</u>	<u>3.17</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>2.20</u>

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CHANGE IN BASIC RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Prior to NDE	27%	15%	50%	N/A	N/A
Following a NDE	18%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A
NON-near-death experience ASSOCIATED	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Out-of-body experiences	9%	15%	17%	N/A	9%
Visions	46%	31%	42%	N/A	15%
Precognitions	55%	46%	67%	N/A	21%

-

We can analyze the findings of Dr. Sabom and see the divergence of the study, among religious denominations, but only a small number of ethnic individuals were used in the study of cross denominational NDE. Exploring the level of faith by the various denominations he felt made a difference in the perception of NDEes and the spiritual connection of the NDE experience. He proved in the *Atlanta Study* that it did not matter about the religious denomination for each religious sector showed evidence of individuals that had experienced a NDE.

The results of that study prove that as much as Dr. Sabom started out to prove that the NDE was a medically educed condition, he ended up actually proving the very real existence of the NDE phenomena as being existence, which crosses the various

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boundaries of faith and as a result convicted his own heart and conviction of Christianity and faith.

The next study I will summarize was conducted by leading NDE researchers Bruce Greyson, Kenneth Ring, and Melvin Morse, who introduced the subject of NDE to the academia world. These individuals piggy-backed off the initial research started by Dr. Raymond Moody, during his medical internship as a psychiatrist at the University of Virginia, which was originally published his findings in this book Life after Life^{xliv} which in 1975 using 150 individuals that had been in a clinical death, returned and had a story to tell of their NDE experience.

Greyson, Ring, and Moore after conducting numerous interviews with hundreds of individuals who experienced an NDE developed viable tools and categories, in which to measure the various degrees of the NDE. They came to the conclusion that the NDE experience is not exclusive to any nation or nationality. The NDE experience is a core experiences with numerous similarities however, the differences and the variations of the experience produce interpretation variables that are dependent upon the culture and the individual's interpretation of the experience. The following are the trait results of their in-depth study, or, is inclusive of individuals that claim no religion or spiritual connection to any faith: The study proved that the NDE is a universal phenomena for the similarities to those that profess a religious faith and belief of an after existence are the same to individuals to claimed to be atheist or anti-religious. Below are the following characteristic traits that were found in this combination research^{xliv}:

1. Sense of being physically dead

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2. Feeling of peace, contentment, or happiness
3. Out-of-body sensation
4. Narrow passage or tunnel movement
5. Encountering of individuals deceased or part of the light
6. Encounter a being of great power
7. Seeing a life review
8. The sense of reluctance to return back to the body
9. Personality transformation such as loss of fear of death, greater or the development of spiritual belief, as well as the development ecological awareness and sense of earthly stewardship.

The NDE Scale that was developed from this combined research team is called the Weighted Core Experience Index. All questions are formulated to address the cognition dimension, feeling of accelerated thoughts, life review, and affect of the emotional feeling, transcendence of being from earth and relative encounters. If the 32 questions are answered and a score of greater than 7 is achieved the researchers believe that differentiates the NDE experience from be accessed as an organic brain syndrome or physical stress related incident. This particular scale has been used in children, college students, clergy and medical personnel who report having a NDE.

The result of this study brought awareness to the medical and clinical community and resulted in a growing interest and focus in the clinical setting. Greyson developed a As a result of this the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS), was developed in 1981^{xlvi}. This organization encourages the scientific research of and the educational focus on the psychological, physical, spiritual and social ramification of the

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NDE experience. This organization is also the storage back of data information and historical archives for further research and study of NDEers case files.

In 1988 Dr. Van Lommel^{xlvii} and fellow associates in the area of Hospital Medicine and Cardiac Resuscitations, launched a study that spanned 10 of the largest Dutch hospitals. He studied 344 survivors of Cardiac Arrest and noted that 18% of the former patients study reported that they had a NDE and out of the section 41 of those patients which was 12%, stated that they believed they had a core conscious out- of- body experience, but felt there was no spiritual connection only a sense of one being with the universe. These individuals report that they have survived without any neurological damage to their brain for remarkably for a time there was an absence of neurological function, which is an important aspect this the brain does not store oxygen, it receives its supply on from what is in the blood.

Survivor After- Effects of the NDE

Dr. Jeffery Long reports that there are phenomenal changes that are considered the norm for NDE survivors. In his book Evidence of the Afterlife,^{xlviii} Dr. Long after studying over 1600 NDE cases and conducting hundreds of personal interviews with survivors noted a commonality of personal changes that typically the NDE survivor goes through after the NDE experience. The Following is a consolidated listing of the common NDE survivor after-effects. Often there are life-changing and acute emotional and physical transformations which are the results of an individual's value system, relationships, perception of life, world-views and spirituality awareness:

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1. The impression and memory of the NDE is unforgettable, as well as the ‘ details of the NDE journey
 2. There is a reluctance to initially share their story, for there is a fear or rejection and questions about the mental stability of the individual
 3. Long’s NDE study questionnaire showed that 73% of NDEers have noted 14% have confirmed there have been no significant changes in their lives
 4. Evaluation of life, job, personal relationship
 5. Greater awareness of one’s surrounding and appreciation of the planet
 6. A feeling renewal towards life, changes in personality and attitudes in a Positive manner
 7. Increased value system in which love is a forerunner of the system
 8. Rapid physical recovery of illness or shortened time in physical rehabilitation
 9. A feeling of greater cognitive understanding and the feeling of possible of psychic abilities.
 10. Increase of faith and the belief of the assistance of the afterlife, which is a Greater extension of life
 11. Loss of the fear of physical death
 12. The belief of Christ existence or a great higher power that is guardian over One’s soul
 13. The awareness of and a sense of being part of a greater plan and having a Specific purpose or assignment in life
 14. Forgiveness and understanding of others that have wronged the individual
 15. A renewed commitment to making a positive change
 16. The appreciation of the gift of live
- All-in-all the NDE person gains not only a greater understanding of themselves, or the life they have lived, but family members note the changes as being primarily positive and life changing.

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Conclusion: This is What I Think And Believe

In conclusion affirmations are based on my own personal experience as a NDE survivor and being an Apologist; I am convinced of the reality of the NDE experience as being viable and real. The questions that I have asked myself about the NDE experience support the claims of the many individuals that have been spoken about in this paper and bring validity to my personal experience.

I too prior to my life changing NDE took life for granted as well as my faith for granted. I too had a presupposition that these types of experiences were merely the result of a medical condition or mentally ill mind. I too was skeptical of others who appeared to have some type of supernatural experience. I too had a fear of death and I too did not believe that there were any future plans for my life, only day to day hardships and survival. I thank my Father, and my Savior Jesus the Christ for proving me wrong.

No, I no longer fear death; death is an eventual end for every living individual and everything on this earth that lives. However, I am assured through my NDE and the researching of others NDE that death is merely an extension of eternity. When I think about the biblical Scripture found in John 5:28,29 (RSV) “ *There is a time when the graves shall hear the voice of man coming forth and Those who have done good, to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment*”. I hold fast the promise of Christ found in Luke 23:43 (RSV), “*Truly I saw to you, today you shall be with ME in Paradise*”.

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As an Apologist I have researched the subject of NDEers and I truly feel that these glimpses are into heaven or hells are for our benefits. Perhaps, we are traveling on a road that is filled with our spiritual destruction or emotional demise and have not had the opportunity to embrace the grace, love and mercy that Christ has for us, which is feeling obtained and freely given. Perhaps, it is in times of our greatest personal despair or when we cannot find a moment of peace or happiness, or maybe it is the conformation of a promise made over two thousand years ago by our Lord found in John 3:15-16 (RSV), "That whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should perish, but have everlasting life".

The glimpse of heaven is a joy, for it produces a passionate heart for Christ. The glimpse of hell is disturbing, for it is the portrait for individuals who lives are not Christ centered, but centered on self. I leave this study knowing my Christian foundational beliefs are committed, convinced, confirmed, and believing that a NDE experience is an opportunity to listen, learn, reflect, change, and continue towards the journey of life seeking others to tell of Christ and His Word.

NDE research is positive for the researches that are faith driven, and negative for those who choose to find ways to draw Christ promises into a category of medical coincidence or a dying brain syndrome, in order to prove that life is not the result of a Master Creator that is on point and Divine. To many unbelievers it is a way out of the obvious, there is eternal life after death, but it is God and not man who makes the

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determination of who dies and who is allowed for whatever reason to return and tell their story resulting in a NDE journey.

Did the journey change the course of my life? Yes! I am a Methodist Pastor and have been for 14 years. I think that is all I have to say about the after effects of my NDE. In clarity and belief I choose to embrace the existence of the spirit within us and the existence of the spirit after physical death. I am reminded in the Bible 1 Corinthians 15: 42-44 (NRS)" So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body and it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a body, there is also a spiritual body".

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