

Went home after church this morning – nap – woke up in panic – not prepared for morning message “WHAT am I preaching on?” then realized I had already preached it – panicked again – not ready for tonight “what AM I preaching on?” – Near Death Experiences (NDE) and accounts of visiting heaven or hell. A biblical view of these expanded views of eternity

Haven’t studied this very much – I have looked at 4 books they are subordinate to the Good Book

- Heaven is for Real – most popular book on an account of 3 or 4 year old’s vivid description of heaven/people/animal/angels/God
- Imaging Heaven – book given to me by sister –in-law – written by pastor – full of many accounts that author says adds color to our view of heaven (Bible is black and white)
- 23 minutes in Hell – not a NDE but claims he was chosen to experience hell to warn others (two trips – travel agency?) many vivid details (other NDE claim multiple trips)
- Near Death My Baptist History Professor – pastor who collected accounts over 30 years. middle of the road approach ??? He will be here on September 13 Q&A
- All of those books are subject to THE BOOK!
 - o Test all things (1 Thess. 5:21-22) Acts 17:11 test the spirits – 1 John 4:1

For full disclosure – I am skeptical (my personality) skeptical approach.....no, just a careful approach . I want to tread softly and not shout when the scripture is silent or go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6)

Differentiate between:

- sight, sounds and last words of people as they die; deathbed experiences (they actually die)
 - o heard testimony from nurses that believers die different
- Resuscitations with limited details (light/tunnel/life review/floating above etc.) sneak peak
- Detailed tours of heaven/hell and visions of God
 - o “The devil is in the details” If you take all of the details from these reports as “gospel”; then you run into many contradictions and problems. They can’t withstand scrutiny

NDE’s are not an uncommon experience nowadays (claim) (several NDE studies from blind people)

- 100’s... 1000’s, of accounts have been given in modern times
 - o Imagine Heaven claims 1 in 25 Americans has had a NDE = 13,000,000(1 or 2 of us here)
- Why this abundance?
 - o Modern medicine and many are resuscitated????
 - o In the last day I will pour out My Spirit – old men dream and young men see visions
 - o Many reports produce many more “experiences” they breed (skeptical) ????
 - Alex Malarkey recanted his book as a hoax (name is ironic)
- The eternal reality could have some temporal verity- (some hoaxes don’t demean all as hoaxes)
 - o eternal destination with temporal verification (heaven and hell are real so.....)
 - o Eternity set in heart- Eccles. 3:11 death is not an end but an entry

Features that “could” fit within scripture

- OOBE's - out of body experiences - Paul - "whether in the body of out I do not know"
 - o 2 Cor. 12:2-4 Paul wasn't sure but all these people know
- Light - Light is a very prominent feature of heaven color
 - o Satan is an angel of light 2 Cor. 11:13-15 Lucifer - luminous
 - o Test the spirits- 1 John 4:1 test all things- 1 Tess. 5:20-22
- Tunnel - yeah though I walk through the shadow of death.... ???????????
- Life flashing or rehearsing before eyes judgment
- Flames
- Recognition of loved ones = rich man and Lazarus
 - o 95% of NDEers who see people see family "gathered to their people" Gen. 25:8,17

Some problem issues/accounts

- Colton did not like his sister hugging him (is there anything in heaven we wont like?)
- report of meeting friend (angel) going thru gates to river- going in river and could breath under water and communicate and noticed that debris was being washed off from river (which was the Holy Spirit - living water). That was preparing him for his eternal stay
 - o Scripture says that nothing impure will ever enter the City - Rev. 21:27
- No one can see God and live. You can see God and die but I question accounts with descriptions of God. Stephen saw the Lord as he was about to die
 - o Ex. 33:20 John 1:18; 6:26 1 John 4:12 1 Tim. 6:15
- NDE visions of God/Jesus are much different that bible accounts
 - NDE- peace/hugging/playing/stroking Jesus' beard. Jesus expressing sadness or the Father cracking jokes about the surgery "they" are both observing
 - Bible - fear/awe/awareness of sin/falling down as dead/
 - Compare Rev. 1:12ff to Coltons picture - they do not resemble
 - o Only 6 people in bible received a vision of God
 - Much different experiences than casual encounters of NDE reports
- The bible has many resurrections and some resuscitations, but no one who ever came back gave a report of what happened (that was recorded). Paul was forbidden from telling
 - o 2 Cor. 12:4 many seem to be free to tell what Paul was forbidden to disclose
- Eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard 1 Cor. 2:9
 - o Eternity is mostly a mystery until we get there Deut. 29:29
 - o 1 John 3:2 "what we will be has NOT been made known"
- Warning about communicating with the dead
 - o Saul and witch contacted Samuel. This can be done but we are forbidden from trying
- Don't add to or take away. Even if an angel preaches another gospel....let them be damned test of a prophet 100% accuracy. Deut. 12:32; 18:20-22 Gal. 1:8-9

The question could be raised the these people are seeing the present heaven while the bible talks about the new heaven - all things new
 Some modern accounts have people being told by "God" to go back to fulfill unaccomplished purpose and tell what they had seen
 Going to hell gave size of cell and described monsters that tormented him-could see the pit in the horizon. Account of car wreck husband in
 bubble, wife in pain and saying you have to go back. Old fishing boats, quaint town, a sea, day and night all "seen" in heaven