**Is there life after death?**

**I: How do you prove that there’s life after death? How do you prove anything? There are 3 main methods of proof;
 1…scientific
 A…you have to observe something
 B…you have to measure that observation
 C…you have to be able to repeat A & B
 This method is 100% accurate where it can be used, but it cannot be used everywhere.
 2…forensic
 Be able to collect all available information about something, then be able to reach a
 conclusion that is beyond a reasonable doubt but not beyond any doubt. This method
 applies to anything in history (whether someone or something existed in the past),
 the legal field (whether someone committed a crime) and to the intangible things
 (like does someone love you). You may use some science in forensics but you are not
 using the scientific method. The forensic method is not 100% accurate but its pretty
 close when used properly.
 3…experiential
 You can determine something for yourself based on your own experience and how it
 affect you. An example is touching what you perceive to be a hot stove. It may be hot
 to you but only warm to someone else. This is the least accurate method of proof.**

 **In regards to life after death, we cannot use the scientific method because we can’t
observe and measure the after-life. We may be able to use the forensic method. We’ll just have to see if there’s enough proof to reach a conclusion. We’ll have to rely on the experiential method.**

**II: Before we can talk about life after death, let’s look at the views of the major religions on life after death.**

 **Naturalists (materialists, non-theists, atheists, etc.) believe that your life, your existence, your “being”, your body is just a collection of atoms and molecules that were put together. When your body dies, you cease to exist. But let’s take this thought to its logical conclusion. If you’re just a random collection of atoms and molecules, then the choices you make are because of how those atoms and molecules tell you what to do. So you don’t really have a “free will”. All of your thoughts and actions are due to the chemical reactions taking place in your brain and body. This is called “fatalistic determinism”. That means that all of your thoughts and actions are determined by the atoms and chemicals in your brain and body. Even your reasonings and feelings are dictated by these chemicals. So you’re not really accountable for your actions because your thoughts are just brain chemicals telling you how to act and behave. Therefore, you’re not responsible for your thoughts and actions. In a solely material world, reasoning, morality and feelings are reduced to your brain chemicals telling you what to do. Ardent evolutionists, such as Richard Dawkins & Daniel Dennett agree that death is the cessation of life and that there’s nothing after that. No heaven, no afterlife, no eternal life, no hell. You just cease to exist. They also believe that you’re not morally responsible for your actions.**

* **Theists are people who believe in a god(s) and an afterlife but their beliefs vary widely. Some are Mormons, Hinduists, Christians, Jehovah’s Witnesses, reincarnationists, etc.**
* **Christianity is a subset of theism. But it differs significantly from other theists in their beliefs of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, heaven, hell and the afterlife.**

 **Hinduism… ‘Nirvana’ (the Hindu concept of heaven) is reached when the good deeds in all of your past lives (reincarnation) outweigh the bad deeds. Then your soul, your identity, becomes absorbed and disappears into the Universal Soul. In other words, you cease to exist. It’s comparable to a raindrop (your soul) falling into the ocean (the Universal Soul). Not much to look forward to, is it?**

**Buddhism…’Nirvana’ (the Buddhist concept of heaven which is a little different than the Hindu concept) is reached when after many reincarnated lives, you reach a state where you will be free of all ‘desires’. But you’ll have to be a monk to reach Nirvana in this Earthly life. A monk must abandon his family, friends & occupation and join a monastery. WOW, not cool at all!
 According to an old Buddhist tradition, a woman can never reach Nirvana even if she becomes a monk. In her last reincarnated life, she must be reborn as a man who becomes a monk. Somehow, I don’t see women flocking to Buddhism!
When you reach Nirvana and then die, your soul (your identity) will be extinguished forever. It is comparable to a candle’s flame being snuffed out. Again, not much to look forward to.**

**Islam…If you’re a good Muslim, when you die, if you’re good deeds outweigh your bad deeds, you’ll make it into Paradise (the Islamic heaven). In Paradise, men will have sex with 72 virgins every day. The next day, those same women will be virgins all over again. The men will also get to have pure water, pure milk and pure wine everyday (this stems from Muslims living in the desert). The men wouldn’t have time to think about spiritual things as all their time will be taken up by their wives. The Islamic Paradise is a sensual one, not a spiritual one. The Muslim men are not changed in Paradise. They’re the same as they were on Earth, with the same strengths & weaknesses. Wouldn’t this get boring after a while? No new challenges, no new adventure, you’re not learning any new things. And what about the Islamic women? Or is Paradise for men only?**

 **Christianity…you’ll be changed into something perfect. You’ll discover new things, learn and explore to your hearts content. Maybe you’ll write beautiful songs or explore the redeemed universe. You’ll have a redeemed, perfect body. You’ll see and interact with other perfected human beings on a perfected Earth or maybe other perfected planets. Your personality will be all that God made you to be without any negatives. God will have forgiven your sins and removed your sin nature so that only great things will remain. You will be perfect for all eternity. There will be no boredom. Now this view of heaven sounds AWESOME!**

**III: What happens at death, according to the bible?
 1…the body dies and is put into the ground or cremated but the person’s spirit goes to be
 with God (Eccl 12:6-7 & 2nd Corinthians 5:1,2 8).
 2…our spirit goes to the intermediate heaven or hell (Luke 23:43 & 16:22-23).
 (Show the graph page of this)
 3…at the end of days, there will be 2 bodily resurrections…
 A…for believers (Revelation 20:5-6 & 1st Corinthians 15:50-55 & Daniel 12:2).
 This resurrection takes place in stages, but we won’t go into that now.
 B…for unbelievers (Revelation 20:11-15 & Daniel 12:2)**

**IV: What are NDE’s (Near Death Experiences)?
 It is the real experience that a person has when they are medically near death or have
clinically died and come back to life. They almost always report an out-of-body experience.
There is a large body of reported NDE’s. There’s been over 4,500 verified cases of NDE’s in 33 countries around the world. Studies in the USA and Germany have estimated that over 4% of the population have had an NDE. In the USA alone, that’s about 13 million people. Since the mid-1970’s, there have been over 9,000 articles published in scholarly journals prior to 2011. “The Handbook of Near Death Experiences” has over 3,500 NDE accounts. All of these studies have much in common, although the people’s interpretation of these NDE’s does vary. Yet people across all of these cultures report similar experiences in both Western and non-Western nations.
 There have been out-of-body experiences that people have had who have not been near death. Many of these people have had an interest in paranormal or occult experiences. Their experiences disagree with what the bible says. For example, many of these people report having spirit guides who deny that Jesus died for their sins. As Christians, since we know what the bible teaches is true, we should compare what the bible clearly teaches to what these spirit guides are saying. If it is different, then we are to believe the bible and not their experiences. Remember, that Satan can come as an angel of light (2nd Corinthians 11:14-15) to deceive people.**

**V: Now let’s look at some of these NDE’s…
Vicki has been blind from birth. She has never seen anything. In her NDE, Vicki was in a car accident. As a doctor and nurse worked on her body, Vicki died in the hospital. Then she floated out of her body. She looked down from above and “saw” herself for the first time ever. She heard the doctor and nurse talking (after she revived, she correctly repeated what they had said to each other). Then she went to heaven and “saw” her two childhood friends that she had lived and grown up with. While on earth, these friends were blind too but also retarded. Even though they had died years earlier, Vicki had described them perfectly according to their housemother. In heaven, all three of them appeared bright, beautiful, healthy and vitally alive. There are much more specific details to her story (page 31-36, 182-183, 188 of “Imagine Heaven” by John Burke). Dr. Pim van Lommel, a Dutch cardiologist and recognized NDE researcher, says that Vicki’s reported observations could not have been the result of sensory perception or of her cerebral cortex.**

 **One young boy, Colton Burpo, who was in the hospital for a burst appendix and almost died, told his parents that he met his “other” sister in heaven in his NDE. That she had died in “mommy’s tummy”. His parents had never told him of his mother’s miscarriage. His Mom asked what her name was. He replied that they hadn’t named her. This was correct. His parents didn’t even know she was a “she”. He told his parents that God had adopted her (page 94-97, the book “Heaven is for Real” by Todd Burpo).
 Todd, Colton’s dad and a minister, once showed Colton a picture of Todd’s grandfather. He was old and wore glasses. He told Colton that he was his great-grandfather. Colton said that nobody wears glasses and nobody is that old in heaven. Todd was skeptical, so he called his mother up and asked her if she had an old picture of his grandfather when he was young. She said yes, but it was taken in 1943, over 60 years ago. Todd showed it to Colton and asked him if he knew who it was. Colton said it was his great-grandfather as that was what he looked like when Colton saw him in heaven. He then asked if he could go out and play! Colton was 4 years old at the time of this incident. Colton was born in 199. Todd’s grandfather died in 1975 (page 120-123 from the same book).**

**In London, England a single mom was admitted to Memorial Hospital with severe bleeding. Suddenly, she had a very clear view of her body on the hospital bed. She was looking at it from the ceiling. She noticed a red sticker on the side of the ceiling fan blade facing the ceiling. She went thru a tunnel toward the light, a light that embodied a love like she had never felt before. She knew in her heart this was God. Her life reviewed before her. Every good and bad deed she had ever done and the effects that they had on others. But she didn’t feel condemned. She felt unconditional love thru it all. Suddenly she popped back into her body. When she told a nurse about her experience, the nurse verified it by looking at the back of the ceiling fan. It had a red sticker on it that she could not have seen unless…**

**One color-blind NDE’er saw “a magnificent landscape full of flowers and plants…a thousand times more beautiful than anything I have ever seen.” Another NDE’er had 360 degree vision. Our earthly eyes cannot see ultraviolet or infrared colors, yet many NDE’ers describe seeing these colors. One NDE’er said that the grass seemed to be translucent. Its color seemed to be alive, dancing in the air. Others described them as the deepest, richest, most lush colors they have ever seen. From forests, to trees, to landscapes, to valleys, to mountains, to rivers…everything seemed to be alive.
Captain Dale Black described it as follows...(page 101-106 from the book “Imagine Heaven” by John Burke). All of this is described in the bible. Read Revelation 7:9, 17  21:10-12, 19, 23   22:1, 2.
Remember, earth is just a shadow of what heaven is like (Hebrews 8:5).  Randy Alcorn, author of the book “Heaven”, says that the verses in Hebrews 8 suggests that God created Earth in the image of heaven just like He created mankind in His image. Eventually, all of creation will be redeemed (Romans 8:20-21). But the heaven of Hinduism or Buddhism or Islam is NEVER described like this. Hindu, Buddhist and Islamist NDE’s match up with that of the bible, not their own religious views of the afterlife.**

 **How could these people know these things unless they really happened?**

**VI: While no two experiences are identical, there are commonalities between them. They are…
 1…out-of-body experiences-75%
 2…heightened senses,  more alert than ever before-74%
 3…Intense positive emotions and feelings-76%
 4…Passing into or thru a tunnel-34%
 5…encountering a brilliant light-65%
 6…encountering other beings and/or deceased rwlatives or friends-57%
 7…a sense that time and space have been altered-61%
 8…a life review-22%
 9…encountering unworldly realms-52%
 10…learning special knowledge-56%
 11…encountering a barrier that they could not go beyond-31%
 12…an awareness that they were returning to their body-59%**

**VII: So, what is a composite picture of an NDE?
 A man is dying, he hears himself pronounced dead by a doctor. He suddenly finds himself outside his body looking down on it. He has a bodily form but it is unlike anything he’s used to. He watches as they try to revive him. Then he travels down a dark tunnel with an incredible light at the end. This light has feelings of unconditional love. He sees spirits of dead relatives and friends that greet him. A being of light appears to him that emanates love like he’s never felt before. He sees his life in review. All the good and bad and the effect it has on others, yet this being of light shows nothing but love for him. This being of light looks amazingly like the biblical descriptions of Jesus. He asks him what he has done with his life. At some point, he is approaching a barrier between this earthly life and the next life. He is told that he must go back, that his time is not yet. He comes back into his body where he feels intense pain, but he lives. This episode has profoundly affected his life. It has changed him for the better.**

**VIII: Who is this “Being of light”?
 Listen to the description of him even from non-western countries. Across all cultures, people, even blind people, describe this being of light like this…
shoulder length white hair, with a beard, wearing a brilliant white robe down to his ankles, held together by a gold sash, piercing eyes that were like flames of fire yet they could see right into your soul yet draw you in with a magnetic warmth and love that radiates forgiveness and love.
 This does not describe any other god. There is no forgiveness in Hinduism or Buddhism or any other eastern religion. They believe in reincarnation, where you get payback for what you’ve done in a previous life.
 Yet read Revelation 1:9-18, Daniel 10: 5-6 & Matthew 28:3. The description of this “being of light” looks a lot like Jesus Christ.
 People tend to interpret their experience thru their own cultural view. Some Indians (from India) interpret this “being of light” as Krishna. But Krishna, a Hindu deity, has blue skin, not white. He is NEVER described like this being of light is. Shiva, another Hindu deity, has three eyes. In Hinduism, the dissolution of the self into the Universal Soul was NEVER mentioned in Indian/Hindu’s NDE’s.**

**IX: The Life Review
 The majority of life reviews start with a question that is asked by this Being of Light. It’s something to the effect of “What have you done with the life that I’ve given you?” It’s not said in judgement but in love, to prompt reflection and learning. Regardless of cultural or religious upbringing, the life review is consistent around the entire world. People are shocked to see that their whole lives are reviewed before their very eyes. All the good and bad things that they’ve ever done are seen. While they seem very embarrassed in some parts, this Being of Light is very loving throughout the entire process. They “see” even their thoughts. They also see other people’s thoughts and how their actions affected the other people, for the good or bad. Dr. Jeffrey Long notes that NDE’ers found that what they had thought were some of the most insignificant things, turned out to be very important in someone’s life. But the opposite was also true. That what they thought was very important, turned out to be insignificant.
 This is consistent with what the bible says in Luke 2:2-3...”...Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light...” In Matthew 12:35-37, Jesus says, “A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him....But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgement for every empty word they have spoken....”
 One Christian woman, Lindi, heard this Being of Light say, ”Let’s look at all the things you’ve done to serve Me...” She said it was all about relationships. There was almost nothing about what the world considers accomplishments or successes. Then the Voice said, “Welcome home, thank you for loving me so well.” She realized Romans 8:1 that there is truly no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (page 250, “Imagine Heaven” by John Burke).
 Another woman said this (read Dr. Mary Neal’s account from page 241). Also read atheist Howard Storm’s account on page 238-240 and then realize what I’ll share about him in the next section.
 Those who experience the life review realize that this Being of light’s love and compassion is not based on what they do. It is unconditional (John 3:17-18), whether they have been good or bad or anything in-between. This goes along with Ephesians 2:8-9. But it’s important to realize that the life review is not a judgement, especially like the biblical judgements that will occur when we actually die...the judgements that will determine where we will spend eternity. Those judgements will be based on whether we have accepted Jesus into our lives to forgive our sins. The life review is just a clarifying reminder that God knows everything about us and that one day, we will have to give an account to Him. Some NDE researchers say that there is no judgement for where we’ll spend eternity but they don’t understand what the bible teaches about judgement. There’s no judgement at all until the story of Earth is complete and human history, as we know it, ends (Revelation 11:15-18).**

**X: Not all NDE’s are pleasant. (page 215-221) 23% of them are very traumatic, disturbing or terrifying according to “The Handbook of Near Death Experiences”. Here are some examples…
 Howard Storm, an atheist and professor of Art at Northern Kentucky University described his NDE like this:
He was in a hospital room unconscious when he felt his “being” separate from his body. He tried talking with the hospital staff and his wife but they couldn’t hear him. Then he heard some people telling him to follow them. They looked like hospital staff, so he followed them. At first, they were polite but as time went on, they started being demanding. Then they started to get downright belligerent. They started fighting with him, It escalated to biting and tearing off parts of his skin. They laughed and swore at him. He had a hard time going on as the memory of what they did to him was too horrific to recall. Then he heard a voice that said “Pray to God”. He was an atheist but in his desparation he prayed a very convoluted prayer. He prayed, “Yea, though I walk thru the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. For purple mountain majesty, mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord…One nation under God. God bless America.” And yes, God even answered a prayer like this. While the demons yelled even more, they began to back away. The more he prayed to God, the more they backed away to the point of not being there at all. He lay on the ground exhausted but he kept praying to Jesus. Then he saw a beautiful light that came forward and enfolded him with such love that he had never experienced before. He knew it was Jesus. Jesus asked him, “What have you done with the life that I have given you?” When he awoke, he devoted his life to Jesus. He went on the become a minister of the gospel.** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_GmifF8Fkc&list=PL0D0C3045367D1C33&index=1>

**Another one was a prisoner who had grown up in an abusive, drug0fueled dysfunctional home. Since this was normal for him, this is how he treated others. A life of crime and drug addiction lead him to a prison sentence. Rather than go to prison, he committed suicide by slicing himself with a knife from his navel up to his rib cage. Immediately, he found himself tied up, bitten and torn apart by a vicious demon. Then another powerful spirit figure appeared that said “Because you have done this, you will be cut off from me forever”. In the midst of this, he cried out, “Lord, help me”. Then he was in a hospital bed with a pretty young nurse telling him, “We lost you for a while, but you’re going to be all right now.” Later in the day, another older nurse came by and told him, “You’re going to be all right. We lost you for a while, but you’re going to live. We’ve never seen anyone live whose liver has been so lacerated.” He later inquired about the pretty young nurse. The staff was puzzled as there was no such person. He now thinks it was an angel (Hebrews 13:2). The viciously angry spirit being who told him that he was cut off from him forever, he originally thought was God. But a minister told him that it was the devil, posing as an angel of light (2nd Corinthians 11:14) and that God answered his prayer right away by returning him to his hospital room (from the book “Revealing Heaven” by John Price). He was eventually released from prison.**

**XI: Let’s compare other NDE commonalities to what the bible says…
 NDE; Bible:
1…Forgiving John 3:16, 1st John 1:9, Psalm 32:5
2…A better body 1st Corinthians 15:35, 40 & Luke 9:29-30
3…We see ourselves as we really are Ephesians 2:8,10
4…No more pain Psalm 56:8, Isa 63:9 & Rev 21:3-5
5…Most beautiful place imaginable Rev 7:9, 17 21:10 22:1-2 & Isa 65:17-25
6…Welcome home party w/people Gen 25:8, 2nd Sam 12:23 & Luke 16:9
7…Exhilarating, not boring Rev 2:26, 28 & Psalm 16:11
8...Earth is a shadow of heaven Hebrews 8:5 & 9:24
9…A life review Matt 12:36-37, 1st Chron 28:9, Eccel 12:13-14
10...Books in heaven Mal 3:16, Phil 4:3, Rev 13:8 & 20:12, 15 & 21:27
 Rev 22:18, 19, Psalm 69:28, 56:8 & 139:16
11...Angels Hebrews 1:14
12...Fallen angels (demons) Ezekiel 28:14-17, Rev 12: 3-7, Isaiah 14: 12-17
 2nd Corinthians 11:14-15
13...Rewards & Judgements Rev 2:9-10 & 11:15,18 & 20:11-12, James 1:12
 Matt 12:36-37 & 16:27 and 2nd Corinthians 5:10
No other religion has this many direct comparisons with NDE’s.**

**XII: Are there physical explanations for these NDE’s?
Yes, there are. Things like oxygen deficiency, CO2 overload, reaction or electrical activity in the brain, hallucinations, etc.
After 30 years of research looking at alternative explanations, oncologist Dr. Jeffery Long concludes that with a flat EEG, that electrical activity in the lower parts of the brain cannot account for the kind of highly lucid and ordered experiences described by NDE-ers. These NDE’s are not dreams, hallucinations or any other cause of impaired brain functionings. Dr. Long has collected over 3,000 testimonies on his website.**

**XIII: Conclusion…
 Those who have NDE’s may truly be seeing Jesus but that does not guarantee that they will be with Him in heaven. Judas was chosen by Jesus, saw His miracles, felt His love and yet he rejected Him. Seeing is NOT believing. Seeing Him and feeling His love does not mean that a person will accept Him into their lives.
 Well-known atheist, A.J. Ayer, had an NDE. He believed that he saw Jesus, yet he recoiled at His light. He turned away from Jesus. Revelation 1:7 says that “Every eye will see Him – even those who pierced Him.” It would be a very bad assumption to presume that people who have seen Jesus in an NDE will automatically accept Him into their lives to forgive their sins. They may talk of seeing God and of all the love that they experienced but if they don’t go one step further and receive Him into their lives, the NDE just isn’t enough. I cannot imagine how anyone would have an NDE and not want more of Jesus, but it has happened.

 With all the other physical phenomena not able to explain an NDE, it definitely seems that they are valid experiences. The two questions are how will people interpret them and what will they do with their experience? Many people have turned their life over to Jesus but some have not. Those that have, have experienced a new life that has given them meaning and purpose. He has changed the course of their life. But then, that’s what He is all about.
 1st John 5:11, 13 says “...God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son...I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” Revelation 21:6 says, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.” Revelation 22:17 says, “The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”. And let the one who hears say ”Come!”. Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life”.

References:
Books;
“Imagine Heaven” by John Burke
“What’s after Life” by John Burke, this is a shortened version of “Imagine Heaven”
“90 minutes in Heaven” by Don Piper
“Heaven is for Real” by Todd Burpo**

**Websites;**

[Near Death Experiences - Think Biblically - Biola University](https://www.biola.edu/blogs/think-biblically/2018/near-death-experiences) (podcast)['Brilliant Man of Light': What 1,000 Near Death Experiences Can Teach Us About Life After Death | CBN News](https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2016/February/Life-After-Death-What-1000-Near-Death-Experiences-Can-Teach-Us)[Near death experiences (cmf.org.uk)](https://www.cmf.org.uk/resources/publications/content/?context=article&id=970)
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