

## Near Death Experiences

### Commentary for September 17, 2011 — Are They True?

I received a question about near death experiences. I usually do not respond to a second question, but I found it necessary to do so in this case.

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#### Question

*Hi David, I enjoy listening to you on the Byte Show and your particular interpretation of the scriptures. I'm curious what your position is on Near Death Experiences, such as Betty J. Eadie had.<sup>1</sup> Thanks \_\_\_\_\_.*

#### My Response about Near Death Experiences

\_\_\_\_\_, A near death experience is a real but uncommon phenomenon.

It is my opinion that near death experience is a manifestation of the brain under stress, either a lack of oxygen or a defense mechanism of the brain. What is experienced during NDEs is often contrary to the teachings of the Bible. Indeed, the information they convey is almost always contrary to the Bible, particularly promoting the concepts of an immortal soul, reincarnation, and often containing some idea of heaven or hell where the dead are presently conscious.

Did Jesus die at the crucifixion or did He continue to "live" in a disembodied form? As the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam, Christ is the example in all things (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). The Bible makes it clear that Jesus died (as in not living — without consciousness — ceasing to exist). Anything else would only be a death of the body.

In fact, near death experiences seem to correspond to what demons experience when they go from person to person, not what a human being ordinarily endures, and yes, they do influence people even at times of death. Visions at death do occur, for example when Stephen was stoned in Acts 7:54-60.

The Wikipedia article "[Near Death Experience](#)" is a good place to continue your investigation on this subject. It is comprehensive. In regard to the biblical information on death, type "death" into the ASK website search engine, and then within the results, look for articles with "death" in the title. One place to start may be Dr. Martin's article "[Near-Death Experiences](#)" and then look at the "[The Death of Death](#)" article by Dr. Ernest Martin. I hope this is helpful,

David Sielaff, Director, Associates for Scriptural Knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> Betty Eadie is the author of 4 books, the first of which, *Embraced By The Light* (1992) told of her near death experiences.

## Response from \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you, David, for your reply and for your input on the matter of Near Death Experiences. I did read the article by Dr. Martin that you suggested.

Your explanation (and might I add, by extension, Dr. Martin's) obviously reflect the teachings of the former Worldwide Church of God, of which I was a member for many years. Since I have left this organization, I have been on a long quest for spiritual truth. There is no shortage of people who claim to have the ultimate truth of the Bible and are quite dogmatic about it, as was the case with the late Mr. Armstrong.

I am neither pro nor con for the arguments presented — I am simply on a quest. I constantly pray for the light of the Holy Spirit, since I have found that I cannot rely on human beings, regardless of the utter sincerity of their beliefs.

Getting back to the Near Death Experiences, I have a rather difficult time writing all these many experiences off as "brain trauma". Many, if not most, of the people who have had a Near Death Experience come back with a changed perception and their lives often reflect a much kinder, more humble, and more grateful disposition than before. I find it hard to believe that such a positive change in attitude could be attributed to demonic influences or defense mechanisms of the brain. Jesus said that "by their fruits you shall know them.

Ecclesiastes states that the **"spirit returns to God that gave it"** — it doesn't state whether or not the spirit has consciousness or not.

Again, thank you for your input David, and I will continue to enjoy listening to your interviews with GeorgeAnn Hughes on the Byte show. Blessings, \_\_\_\_\_.

## My Response

\_\_\_\_\_, I am sorry that you found the information from the Bible unconvincing.

Indeed, I was with the WCG, as was Dr. Martin. That was 39 years ago. I hope you noticed ASK is radically different from that teachings and understandings.

Apparently those who experience Near Death Experiences claim to know more than do the dead:

**"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten."**

• **Ecclesiastes 9:5**

Note what is being said:

[1] the dead know nothing,

[2] they have no reward, and

[3] they have no memory (because they are not conscious, they're dead!).

Was Solomon ignorant? Jesus said Solomon was the wisest of men. Apparently Jesus was wrong about Solomon. (Maybe Jesus did not know the truth of life and death! — unlike those who have near death experiences.) This verse by Solomon certainly cannot be true, so let us throw it out.

How about this verse from King David: **“For there is no mention of You [God] in death; In Sheol who will give You thanks?”** (Psalm 6:5 New American Standard). Read the King James Version of Psalm 6:5 if you like. No, perhaps we do not like that verse either, so let us ignore this verse also. Was David ignorant?<sup>2</sup>

What about King David? He has not ascended into heaven. He is in his grave:

**“Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. ... For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he [David] says himself, ‘The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit you on my right hand.’”**

• Acts 2:29, 34 KJV

Peter spoke these words at Pentecost. But, what did Peter know? He and the disciples only had the experience of seeing, speaking with, eating with, touching, and being instructed by the resurrected Messiah, Christ Himself for many days. Did not Peter know that David is in resurrected glory, as Ms. Eadie and others who have near death experiences tell us? So, Peter’s statement is obviously ignorant and inconvenient, so let’s discard this verse.

According to Ms. Eadie, her husband is in glory, but according to the apostle Peter (who was instructed by Christ), King David is not. Most interesting! But ... who should we believe? Why believe Scripture when we have first-hand experience of Ms. Eadie who ... by the way ... contradicts plain statements of Scripture?

Do you see how things progress into a degenerating spiral? Soon you believe in an immortal soul or spirit, continuance of life in a different form immediately after death, and suddenly, the resurrection is no big deal!

\_\_\_\_\_, the only person who has survived death through spiritual resurrection is Jesus Christ. There have been physical resurrections who were restored to physical life such as the widow’s son (1 Kings 17:17–24), Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:21–43 and Luke 8:40–56) and Jesus’ friend Lazarus (John 11:1–44).

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<sup>2</sup> Here are some other relevant passages. Psalm 30:9:

**“What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise you? shall it declare your truth?”**

Psalm 88:10-12, speaking of God:

**“Will you [God] show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise you? Selah. Shall your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or your faithfulness in destruction? Shall your wonders be known in the dark? and your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?”**

Psalm 115:17:

**“The dead praise not YHWH, neither any that go down into silence.”**

**“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because MANY false prophets [human and spirit] are gone out into the world.”**

• **1 John 4:1 KJV**

Note the word “many” — not few, but many. How have you tried the spirits? Have the people you are concerned about done so? How was that done? Did you ask the spirits if they are telling the truth? What response would a lying spirit give? So ... how do you tell, how do you test? If you do not know how to do that, then study ... and read a little further in the chapter to find out. Remember, John was an eyewitness to Jesus’ resurrection.

There is no small conceit about receiving a revelation, a vision, a sighting, a visitation, or a near death experience. Such experiences make people feel special. It almost seems as if being a child of God with His Holy Spirit is not quite good enough. My familiarity with people who have such experiences is that they somehow feel a little more “chosen” than others who have not had such experiences. “Spirit” has noticed their true worth.

Such people (and I have met hundreds if not more, even public figures you might recognize) have their egos stroked with just a right amount of mystery so they are very willing to interpret their experience according to the script of whoever or whatever is pulling the strings. They are being played. They are being lied to. It is what evil spirits do. They tell, show, and give experiences that are contrary to the teachings of Scripture.

You state *“I find it hard to believe that such a positive change in attitude could be attributed to demonic influences or defense mechanisms of the brain.”* I fear you greatly misunderstand the nature of spiritism. Its purpose is to seduce with “good” images and feelings and sensations. That is what 2 Corinthians 11:13–15 is all about. It is not just referring to human beings. It is referring to spirits also, including Satan.

What has been the “fruits” of Betty Eadie’s teachings? It is to show that we are immortal, that death is not death, and that life continues in a disembodied state, all contrary to the Bible. The goal is to entice, to lead away — until the Scriptures become merely interesting stories in the minds of the “special” person. After all, such people receive revelations directly from “the source” (supposedly). The Bible is redundant; do we or anyone really need it?

I pray to see you in the resurrection when Christ returns. Perhaps we will recognize each other in the air. If not, we will meet later when we and all mankind will be reconciled to God and to each other. After all, it is God’s will (1 Timothy 2:4) — not His wish or whim, but His will, and all things are done according to the purpose of His will (Ephesians 1:11). Indeed, all intelligent beings will be reconciled to God — even the lying spirits.

Again, I hope this has been helpful.

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