

FOREWORD BY JOHN BURKE

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REVELATIONS
from
HEAVEN

A True Account of
Death, the Afterlife, &
31 Supernatural Discoveries

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MY FIRST REVELATION

DURING THAT PERIOD, the charge nurse had stepped away from the main desk. She failed to notice that my monitor registered a flatline—no heart rhythm. Sometimes, patients will turn in their bed thereby dislodging the monitoring electrodes, or they pull the electrodes off of their skin to go to the bathroom. Some clinicians falsely assume that a flatline means that the electrodes were just accidentally pulled off of the patient. Neither of these happened in my case. My heart had actually stopped.

A couple visiting me discovered my lifeless body. They alerted a nurse to the fact that my heart monitor showed a flatline and they could not awaken me, and my flesh appeared as an ashen color. According to the monitor, my heart had stopped for almost thirty minutes before I was resuscitated by the attending clinicians.

What I am about to share with you now are not just the experiences of my afterlife. I am going to share some epiphanies I experienced in paradise, what I instantly knew to be Heaven. I call these revelations. The insights I gained during my time before being revived have illuminated my life since then, and I trust that my lessons learned will help to inspire your life as well.

EXPERIENCES IN THE AFTERLIFE CAN VARY

Many accounts of near-death experiences focus on descriptions of an ethereal paradise in exclusion of any religious ascriptions. They speak of a “light,” a “tunnel,” of “lush scenery,” or some other descriptive quality. I feel compelled to clarify that my experience was consumed with being in the presence of Jesus. I know this may offend those who do not believe in God, or who consider Jesus Christ to be only a historical figure. It may even offend some believers in Jesus Christ who cite certain Scriptures, such as John 3:13 that states: *“No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man,”* which is commonly used to refute NDE stories of Heaven as either fabricated or imagined. Paul wrote of someone—presumably himself—who went to Heaven in Second Corinthians 12:3-4.

Are these Scriptures in conflict with each other? In speaking with Nicodemus—a Pharisee and member of the Jewish ruling council—as documented in chapter 3 of the book of John, Jesus explains that a person who won’t believe earthly claims won’t believe heavenly ones, either. Jesus was stating that if Nicodemus, or anyone else, rejects what Jesus states about Heaven, there is no other source to which they can reference. In John 3:13, Jesus makes claim to His “exclusivity.” Essentially, Jesus means that He is the one and only way to God—there are no other options. So, no, those two claims made by Jesus and Paul do not conflict with each other. John 3:13 speaks of Jesus as the only way to Heaven, and Paul is speaking of visiting Heaven.

As to NDE claims from people who did not meet Jesus, or who did not believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, please allow me to propose what some refer to as an “invariant hypothesis.” Christians can explain how they came to know Jesus Christ

as their Savior in different ways, as in saying something like, “I’ve always known Jesus as my Savior”; whereas, others might know the very moment their life was changed through a transformational experience with the Holy Spirit.

Experiences vary, just as near-death accounts vary even though God remains constant regardless of those individual experiences. Indeed, interpretations of experiences inevitably vary from person to person. You and I could visit Venice, or the Grand Canyon, or meet a group of people at a party, and our descriptions of our experiences would not be exactly the same because of the variant filters of our minds.

Those NDE persons who do not identify themselves as Christians describe their afterlife in various ways as well. My account, while being in a space or place before settling in the presence of Jesus, was far different from the place I experienced while in the presence of Jesus. My initial experience in the light after my physical death was ethereal and sometimes extra-terrestrial as though traveling through a spiral galaxy within a dimension entirely foreign to my perception of time, space, and even my common awareness of all things familiar. The light permeated the darkness in a realm of light and shadow that eventually drew me to the source of that light, Jesus. Thereafter, my experience being with Jesus was entirely consumed with the love of Jesus Christ in paradise—nothing else mattered but being in Jesus’ presence.

From my perspective, I was in two different places—one just after I died, and one being in the presence with Jesus in Heaven. More than one hundred Bible verses speak of the heavens as plural, but in the space of communing with Jesus was God’s dwelling place, a realm that existed where everything operates according

to God's will. That place I strolled with Jesus was set apart from any other domain, a singular empyrean named Heaven that I will later describe.

So my hypothesis is that the spiritual realm can be experienced in different ways; however, an experience with Jesus Christ can only be enjoyed by those who accept Jesus as He claimed to be in His own words to a woman during the time Jesus traversed this earth as He said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die"* (John 11:25).

Please allow me to address all of these doubts with one important realization—God can do anything, and His existence is not predicated on any individual's beliefs. Though God never contradicts His promises or stated truths, God's *modus operandi* is to reveal Himself, even if He must use seemingly absurd vehicles such as a burning bush, a donkey, the wind, or countless flawed people, like me. According to ancient writings, eight people went to Heaven without dying, including Enoch, Noah's great grandfather (Genesis 5:22-24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11).

In the New Testament of the Bible, Stephen, Paul, and John all experienced visions of Heaven. As a former agnostic, I understand others' skepticism about any rigid adherence to Jesus Christ as the "only way," but as someone who met Him face-to-face, I can state emphatically and without reservation that Jesus is indeed the way, the truth, and the life—and that no one can meet God except through the One with whom I journeyed in Heaven. I sincerely hope that you will someday be equally awed by Jesus' overwhelming presence in paradise. If I could simply transfer my experience of Heaven into your soul and spirit, you would likely cave to the floor in a flood of tears ushering forth indescribable awe and joy, as I did.

If the debate is whether near-death experiences are real, I could remain silent as I did for fourteen years after my own NDE. If the debate is whether Jesus Christ is real, I will not remain silent. I will shout that indisputable fact to anyone who will listen. And I hope that includes you. And, for anyone who calls me a lunatic, liar, or idealist for declaring the personal reality of Jesus Christ, I simply say this—you are loved more than you know.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I experienced a crisis of faith only two weeks before dying. God answered my desperate plea to show Himself to me, but it required that He stop my physical heart to release my spiritual heart in Heaven so that I could see Him face-to-face.

EXPERIENCING MY FIRST ENCOUNTER

My first recollection after my body ceased functioning was that of my spirit rising above my body, which I faintly saw from below. A brilliant light pulled me upward, like the sun, only this light did not burn. It soothed. My senses were piqued, clear, and my visions were lifelike, unlike the indistinct accounts of dreams or hallucinations.

I saw gargantuan figures battling in the far distance upon fields of grass and rolling hills. Not sure of what was happening, all I could do was cry out the name of Jesus, all the while feeling peaceful without a care in the world.

Next, my feet settled on a cushiony ground. A soft figure snuggled against me as He placed His arm around me and pressed His soothing face against my cheek. His bristles were soft and His skin smooth. It was Jesus. Being with Him felt as though we had been pals for eons. I knew it. My awareness was piqued. My senses more pronounced than ever before. I smelled, saw, felt, and understood

things more than at any time in my life. For the first time in my life I could breathe deeply, inhaling fragrances never before realized. The light emanating from Jesus illuminated everything around me.

“I am with you, my beloved,” Jesus said. “Always.”

I caved to the ground in awe of my Lord and Savior. His hand rested on my left shoulder as He grasped my right hand to pull me up. I was sobbing with breathless adoration being in the presence of the Almighty, my best Friend, consummate Love.

“Trust Me,” He said.

I stood as Jesus’ left arm pulled me into His side. I felt at home. No worries, no fears, no regrets...absolute comfort.

Some wish to know how Jesus appeared. His face impressed me most since a robe covered His body, but even that did not influence me overall. His face was symmetrical with thick eyebrows, almond shaped eyes, straight nose, olive skin, full cheeks and lips, strong jawline, brownish-green eyes, pointed chin, and a full head of dark hair. His serene physical appearance seemed surreal at first, and then I understood that the quintessence of Jesus’ appearance was a divine embodiment of love and kindness and gentleness that made His outward characteristics seem irrelevant to how Jesus appeared to me. I presumed that the light flowing from Jesus was the burgeoning emittance of love, like we might visualize from the moon’s reflection of the sun. If anyone could paint both a radiant and comforting picture of love, that would be Jesus.

The first takeaway from my intimacy with Jesus was that His exclusive focus was on me, just me. I knew that the cares of the world rested on His shoulders, but when we were together, cheek to cheek, I felt like I was the most important person to Jesus.

Never in my life had I felt that kind of absolute devotion. I don't know how Jesus did that, but I have talked with other NDEers who also clinically died—their hearts stopped—and each one experienced a similar if not same phenomena. He sees you as though you are the only person in Heaven and on earth, was my takeaway.

Revelation #1: You are like the only person in the world to God.

You may have heard the saying, “When you were born, the mold was broken,” meaning that no one else is just like you. More so, God sees you as though you are the most special person in all of creation. When Jesus looked at me, His eyes glistened with love. I truly believed that He saw *only* me. I don't understand how He did that. Jesus assumed the cares of the world, and yet I possessed God's exclusive attention. That same absolute attentiveness applies to each of us.

This overwhelming revelation translated into not only my personhood, it also unveiled my inimitable purpose in life. In Heaven, God exposed to me my special imprint. After being initially awestruck and caving to my knees, realizing that I stood in the presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus and I strolled together as best friends. I journeyed along with my Companion both awestruck by Jesus and comfortable with Him at the same time. Because our hearts were kindred in Heaven, my sense of knowing God's truth seemed almost instinctive.

I knew that my time in Heaven served a purpose, and I believe that purpose includes my sharing some deep insights with you. Jesus revealed my uniqueness in Heaven, exposing my truest self. I know that He also wants to expose your singularity and specialness

as well. Before you were born, God fashioned you and me for a reason. That reason is for a Kingdom impact. But before you can make that impact, I want to tell you how special you are to God.

YOU ARE MORE SPECIAL THAN THE ANGELS

Please allow me to explain why you are so important to God, if I may be so bold. Perhaps the most common question others have asked me about my time in Heaven is whether I saw angels. The answer is “yes.” Their tall, towering figures were translucently clear and formed like chiseled Olympian bodies cut from stone and draped in white linens through which their long brass-colored arms protruded. Their eyes appeared more like fire than pupils. And the voice of one angel reverberated an echo more powerful than the volume of several humans. I know these descriptions may sound bizarre, and not very humanlike. Indeed, these angels were more awesome than any other creature I saw around me.

Now, here is what struck me about the angels’ presence. Their awesome sight appeared to command reverence, although only God was worthy of being worshipped. Conversely, Jesus appeared to me in a plain robe, curly brown hair over His ears, hands and feet like mine; in fact, He appeared as a very ordinary man compared to the angels—more like me. If not for the overwhelming depth of love I felt from Jesus, I might have been tempted to speak with one of those colossal angels because their mere brilliancy commanded attention. It was then that I understood how legions of angels could have abandoned God in favor of the masquerading “*angel of light,*” satan (2 Corinthians 11:14). They were that compelling.

As for me, Jesus elicited congeniality. He felt as a relatable friend whose love commanded reverence more so than His appearance. I

felt entirely at home with Jesus; and frankly, I was a little scared of the angels even though they followed Christ's commands with a simple motioning of Jesus' head, hands, or eyes. As for me, my Lord's hands simply hugged me with reassurance.

"What you see are My angels, and yet you do not know them," Jesus said to me.

"They are foreign to me, Jesus, but not You. You are...I can't even explain it."

"You know more than words, My child," He said, "your heart tells you who I am to you."

"I want to say my forever Friend, Lord," I said. "Before meeting You in this place, I thought You were a little bit scary, but not now. It is like You have traveled with me for my whole lifetime, and I was the best with You, and the worst apart from You. You were my best Friend all along, and I didn't even know it."

"So be it. What you say is true. There is none closer than Me. You see around you all that we created, and they are good, but you are of My Spirit, beloved. You see with your eyes that which you desire. Now see with your heart that which I desire."

With those words I felt within my heart a bursting desire to serve my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He was greater than all of creation and still the humblest of all. I wanted to worship Him with more than I could possibly express.

Now allow me to turn the attention on you. Our spirits were conceived by God's Love. That makes us special. In Heaven I felt more special than even those majestic angels, though now, amusingly, I can better appreciate those amazing "bodyguards" that Jesus may send us from time to time. My point is that the glory of God, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, rests within the kindred—us. He is perhaps less striking than the angels, and yet Christ is more

spectacular than any other in Heaven, and certainly more relatable. The fact that amid all of the splendor in Heaven and on earth, Jesus dotting over you and me above all else, should cause each of us to feel wonderstruck.

My motivation for serving Christ became magnified in Heaven. All of us should try to grasp God's absolute devotion to each of His children. Once we grab onto the quintessence of God's overriding attention on us, the translation to us must be to please God above all else. To please God is the ultimate challenge for the human race.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM PLEASING GOD?

We can tell whether we are making a Kingdom impact by assessing whether an action does one of two things: it either draws us closer to God or it draws others closer to God. Of course, a Kingdom impact can do both and yet sometimes, as with prayer, it only draws us closer to God.

Maybe you know that the Lord's Prayer includes the sentence: "*Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*" (Matthew 6:10). This speaks to making a Kingdom impact. You probably have heard that a thousand times. But maybe you never really thought through what that means to you, personally. God imprinted His will within your spiritual DNA even before you were born. He called out your name in Heaven, and He placed within you the will to do *His will*. We can never be satisfied in this life unless we remain true to that spiritually genetic "will" that separates you and me from every other person on earth and distinguishes you from each person in all of history. Jesus made this abundantly clear to me.

I am not referencing simply your characteristics. The personality or behavioral style that psychologists and trainers teach, like whether you are an INFP or Type 3, only compares your general

style to the millions of others around the world. God did not create you from a group-think perspective. He created you as an “N of 1,” a term the scientist uses when a single patient is the entire trial. Meeting the Creator of humankind taught me this much.

You are the “apple of God’s eye,” as stated three times in the Bible—Deuteronomy 32:10; Psalm 17:8; Zechariah 2:8—meaning that God remains absolutely focused on you as uniquely special to Him. You are the favored child, the most loved, and that is true of all of God’s children. God’s attention on you is absolute, just as I felt it in Heaven. Mind you, each one of God’s children draws God’s same singular attention and imprint. Only God can do that. No one else in my entire lifetime has come close to that level of devotion.

To say that you are special would be a gross understatement. You are the last of your kind. A failure to fulfill your singular purpose on this earth will leave a void in this world forever. No one else can be you, just as no one else can complete the work that God ordained for you from the beginning of your existence. Jesus made that revelation from Heaven clear to me as we journeyed together.

Most of us will be forgotten within three generations in this world, but not within the spiritual realm of God’s creation. Jesus taught me that He longs for us to establish our influence on earth that creates a feeling of His being home on earth as it is with Jesus in Heaven. Our prayers and passionate service to God establishes a home for Jesus in this world that remains everlasting on this earth. Our devotion to God creates an abiding influence of His divine revelation.

I discovered during my walk with Jesus that there exists a vacuum in this world that extends throughout history because of unfulfilled purposes. It lingers like a spiritual black hole such that

the light of Jesus Christ cannot penetrate the darkness, all because of lost opportunities for God's children to be the light of Christ in this world. I learned that bringing the light of Jesus Christ happens by enjoining our acts of love for others with God's love for us.

While ascending to Heaven I viewed a darkness that I later learned resulted from lost dreams, drawing me to pray, just as I witnessed Jesus interceding on our behalf. As believers in Jesus Christ, the will of God is poured from Heaven to earth whenever we heed the calling of God to make a Kingdom impact in this world. That impact fills the darkness, the emptiness, the void created by lost opportunities with the light of Jesus Christ that creates life to the full. I could see these dynamics with my spiritual eyes that perceived not just material realities, but intentions as well. What can be seen in Heaven and what can be felt, blended into an awareness of what was beyond just appearance to the manifestation of intentions.

People who do good for others fashion an everlasting imprint in the spiritual realm that blesses countless people. That makes you and me special in God's plan. Without you, God's intentions for this world remain uncompleted. This world would become an unfinished piece of art without your presence and contributions. The chain of your influence extends to countless people such that if God opened your spiritual eyes to reveal how many people were touched by you, as Jesus did with me in Heaven, you would be astounded. Not hundreds, not thousands, I saw millions of people touched by one lone soul.

Know this: you are not just a speck in this world, you mean the world to God. When Jesus cupped my cheeks with His hands, His emerald-brown eyes revealed more than a gaze. His hands felt more profound than a casual touch. I felt sanctified. What does

sanctification mean? In Heaven it meant that Jesus imbued me with His holiness. It felt like being filled with water after being parched, only that water was Christ's Spirit quenching my heart, filling me with God's love so that my heart supernaturally spilled out God's abiding love from the wellspring of my spirit. In the world I strove to be more Christlike. In Heaven, Jesus imparted that grand desire to the full.

Jesus conveyed upon my soul an intimacy beyond any previously felt connection. Jesus was wholly devoted to me as I longed to be faithful unto Him in return. Our longing in this world should be to honor that devotion by also devoting our lives to Jesus Christ, thus making our Kingdom impact complete. Just as Jesus was fully devoted to me, He expected my full devotion to Him as my one and only God.

WILL WE EXPERIENCE FAMILY THE SAME WAY IN HEAVEN?

Some have asked me whether our devotion to God means sacrificing the family unit that many of us enjoy in this life. The plain answer is no. All relationships in Heaven are enhanced, with one qualification: relationship to the fullest in Heaven stems from God.

I was fully cognizant of my loved ones left behind, yet even more aware of the undivided attention that God lavished on them. This realization assuaged my concern that Renee might not be able to financially provide for our family as we had planned, or that I would not see my son and daughter grow up, or that I could not care for my aging parents. Understanding that God had assumed my paternal and spousal position in Heaven allowed me to implicitly trust in God's providence. In Heaven, God fully

assumes the role as Father and as Husband (Hosea 2:16; Jeremiah 31:32).

This explains why in Heaven we will be aware of our marriage partners and our positions as a son or daughter and as parents; however, God will satisfy all of those desires for which we yearn in this world so that all relationships will be rooted in the abiding love of Jesus Christ. We will remain “spiritually affectionate” toward those family members from this life, as I was with my grandmother in Heaven, without the need for familial affinity except that of being a child of God. Being “*heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ*” (Romans 8:17) translated into absolute devotion to God in Heaven, and an absolute feeling of kinship with my brothers and sisters in Christ.

JESUS SHOWED ME THE PAST

In Heaven, Jesus showed me a life review similar to vignettes you might see through a flashback. They appeared as fast-paced movie scenes with me as the imbedded main character. Each scene elicited God’s grace and comfort, even for those situations in which I failed. While witnessing them I was actually reliving the smells, sensations, and the sentience of others as well as my own feelings.

Jesus showed me a scene while praying with my grandmother so that she could receive Christ; and the same when I prayed with my father as he confessed Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior; and then he showed a frail boy lying within a hospital bed. I had previously met this boy when I was a teenage agnostic while working in the hospital as a volunteer. I served him a meal.

“I’m dying of cancer,” the boy had said to me decades earlier.

Not knowing quite what to say, I simply responded, “Oh.”

“Don’t worry,” he said. “I’m going to Heaven, and you’ll be there someday too.”

“Oh, I don’t believe in Heaven, but I’m sure if there is one, you’ll be there,” I answered.

“I’ll pray for you,” he said.

A few days later I stopped by the boy’s room again. His bed was empty. I checked with the nurses’ station, and a nurse said, “He’s not with us anymore.”

“He went home?” I asked.

“No,” she said. “He died a couple days ago.”

That was my playback in Heaven. Little did I know that one day his statement, “You’ll be there someday too,” was today, now, as I viewed those moments with the boy in retrospect. I had forgotten this part of my life until God played it back to me in Heaven. Now I understand that this boy’s prayers helped bring me to know Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

I believe God showed me this story, and the other stories of salvation, to reveal to me the Kingdom impact of our prayers. When we pray, “God’s will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,” we are literally praying God’s will into existence on earth. We are making a Kingdom impact. And that impact is yours and mine to make—no one else in this world can make it for us.

WHY LOVED ONES CANNOT RETURN TO VISIT THE LIVING

Because purpose defines our reason for being here, the loss of a loved one in death leaves us with an indelible hurt. That loved one can no longer support us on this road of life. We often feel left with a hole in our ability to thrive because their loss deprives us of the full measure of joy we so earnestly seek.

Would it not be easier if God allowed our loved ones to visit us once in a while? Maybe a nice chat by the fireplace? A familiar embrace? A chance to say what was left unsaid?

As I looked across the vastness of Heaven untouched by darkness in the glowing light of Jesus Christ, a massive summit separated the light of Christ from a grey murkiness on the other side. I had the distinct feeling that was the place where I ascended through the darkness after dying as Christ's brilliancy pulled me into Heaven. A tunnel appeared in the distance similar to the whirling funnel of a tornado. It contrasted so strikingly to the lush scenery in Heaven bathed with daylight, hills dotted with what appeared to be vineyards, and frolicking figures both ethereal and distinct.

"Jesus, what's that?" I asked while pointing to the funnel over the hill.

"The place between here and the world from which you came," Jesus said.

I knew instantly that a spiritual chasm existed between Heaven and earth. Once on the other side of Heaven, the same burdensome feelings and disappointments with which we struggle in this world would oppress anyone who crossed that great divide to return to this life. Indeed, soon after awaking from Heaven in the hospital, the peace and comfort I had realized in Heaven was gone. I was no longer free of my failings. That stark reality initially haunted me in the hospital bed in striking contrast to being in the full presence of Jesus.

My point in sharing this experience with you is that if God allowed your loved ones to cross that great divide, your loved ones would lose the perfect comfort and faultlessness they now enjoy in Heaven. You would not want to sully their joy, would you?

I believe that is why God has returned many of us to testify of Heaven, so that our loved ones in Heaven can continue to flourish while we who recovered in our mortal bodies can declare the reality of the afterlife. Those who have passed from this world have fulfilled their purpose in this life. You and I have not.

When tough times burden your soul, please dwell on the best that you can imagine, and then multiply that by a “million times” to approximate the splendor of your future with God in a place where the harmonization of all things good is not only a dream, it is your future.

MY ODE TO HEAVEN

My purpose in life before my NDE was to honor God, and that remains much the same, with one important change. Now, I speak of things that cannot be seen as having seen them. Some of my travels exposed me to some of the most breathtaking places around the world. I marveled at the pounding waterfalls sliding over the mountaintops of Yosemite National Park, pondered the panel of the Sistine Chapel painted by Michelangelo entitled, “The Creation of Adam,” which famously shows God reaching His finger to touch Adam’s outstretched hand. I have gazed at centuries-old olive trees on the Mount of Olives, imagining one reaching over Jesus while He agonized there just before His arrest, and I cruised on the Mediterranean Sea during a similar storm experienced by the apostle Paul as he traveled to evangelize the known world. I do not think any of these wonders compare to the magnificence of Heaven.

So after returning from Heaven and as I began recovering from my injuries, a period of melancholy consumed me. I missed Heaven. During these moments I started penning a poem about

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Heaven as a cathartic process of assimilating to the afterlife of my afterlife. Though I do not consider myself a poet by any stretch, the following is what I wrote:

Jesus gleamed at the peak with power found,
And the life, breath and love of every sound,
Seen brightly through the mountains' domes of green,
God's watching throughout, favor all around;
Artistry blossoms into waters clean,
And the sky sparkled with a daytime star,
On this side of eternity afar.
Trees reached their arms to Thee in praise, oh my;
And flowers along rivers flowing by;
The sound of every living thing is God's.
His wind blew waves to shine His light on high,
God's light cleansed away all that made men sigh.
His light did spread through clouds that never teared.
God's glory bathed the righteous from all feared,
Washed with scents of sweet flowers in the air.
Now a lifetime from first love, I despair;
And pondering that walk, if I could see,
A glimpse of His face making sorrow cease,
My longing soul would dwell in perfect peace.
I desperately long to journey back,
Walk that path, open my soul to unpack,
When my heart rests in the arms of Christ...oh,
To rest anew through Heaven's afterglow.