

Series: Angels, Demons, Heaven, and Hell

Title: Heaven - Pt. 5

Date: April 5, 2020

Purpose: To review what the Bible says about heaven, where it is, who gets to experience it, and what we will do there

Introduction - Today, in this final lesson, I want to share some additional stories from the book *Imagine Heaven* by John Burke. Burke is pastor of the Gateway Church, Austin, TX. He has made a very thorough study of hundreds of reports people have made of their near-death experiences (NDE) and he shares what he learned from his study in this book. In addition, he compares what people recall having experienced with what scripture says related to many of our biggest questions of heaven. The compilation of common experiences shared by thousands of near-death survivors point to the exhilarating picture of heaven promised in the Bible.

As I have said before when I referenced from this book, these accounts are NOT scripture. However, when multiple people experience the same or very similar things during a NDE and these line up with what the Bible says, the stories suggest something about what might await us as resurrected human beings. I found the book fascinating and want to conclude these lessons on heaven by sharing what NDE experiences suggest things we will enjoy when we arrive in heaven.

- I. The background story of the book
- II. The core NDE experiences
 - A. Out of body experience: separation of consciousness from physical body
 - B. Heightened senses: more alert than normal
 - C. Intense and generally positive emotions or feelings: incredible peace
 - D. Encountering a mysterious or brilliant light
 - E. Encountering other beings: mystical or deceased family or friends
 - F. A sense of alteration of time or space
- III. Interpreting the experiences
 - A. All stories are only interpretations of the experiences
 - B. The elements that line-up with the Bible we should accept as accurate
 - C. Those that do not line up with the Word, should be treated skeptically
 - D. However, many also report struggling to put into human words what they experienced in a heavenly place
- IV. The sharing of stories

Burke, John. (2015). *Imagine Heaven*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
(Available from Amazon for \$10.49)