

*Amazing Evidence: Grounds for Belief*

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# **Amazing Evidence**

*Grounds for Belief*

Terrence J. Hatch

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## *Special Thanks*

### *To Reviewers*

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## Table of Contents

*Page 9 – Introduction*

*Page 11 – Chapter 1 - Evidence of Life After Death*

Near death experiences of celebrities and others constitute objective evidence of a greater reality.

*Page 25 – Chapter 2 - Evidence of miracles from the Exodus.*

Artifacts, terrain, are clues that the miracles of the Exodus actually occurred.

*Page 39 – Chapter 3 - Evidence of Leviathan*

Surprising facts suggest the sea serpent Leviathan which is mentioned several places in the Bible may have not been fictional after all.

*Page 63 – Chapter 4 - Evidence of Three Days and Three Nights*

Skeptics cite “three days and three nights” as a reason to attack faith. But obscure Jewish traditions illuminate the Gospels, eliminate contradictions, and redefine a modern holiday.

*Page 81 – Chapter 5 - Evidence and Misinformation*

Some sources in the mainstream media have promoted deceptions that have affected almost every person's thinking. The truth is revealed.

*Page 95 – Chapter 6 - Evidence of a Matrix in the Mind of God*

One scientific discovery about the nature of reality indicates the Creation story may be more scientific than most are aware.

*Page 101 – Chapter 7 - Evidence from Isaiah*

A fascinating pattern implies a supernatural author and suggests Christ had a divine identity.

*Page 109 – Chapter 8 - Evidence from Codes in the Bible*

Several types of codes and patterns in the Bible go beyond human abilities to create.

*Page 117 – Chapter 9 - Evidence from Mount Moriah*

A little understood chapter in Genesis is shown to contain a prophetic message of amazing grace.

*Page 127 – Chapter 10 - Evidence vs. Silly Theories*

Scholarly sounding theories attempt to explain away miracles while failing tests of common sense.

*Page 133 – Chapter 11 - Evidence and Truth*

An essay clarifies the nature of truth and evidence.

*Page 139 – Chapter 12 - Evidence of a Personal God*

Evidence is offered from the author's own experiences.

*Page 143 – References*

*Page 148 – About the Author*



## **Introduction**

If you wish to energize "the hope that is in you," then this book is for you. Its purpose is greater than embarrassing skeptics or winning debates. Instead, it is for anyone wishing to investigate the truth of Christian faith. The essence of this book is evidence – not philosophy. There isn't much here that is philosophical, emotional, or even doctrinal. Instead, it contains facts. As a result, most will agree it is persuasive, and points to the reality of a loving and just God.

Since truth can usually be supported by many types of evidence, this book's scope is necessarily wide. In fact, each chapter deals with a uniquely different topic. The reader will find that one chapter is easy to grasp, while another requires more concentration. One imparts head knowledge, while another spiritual wisdom. A few chapters may need to be read more than once in order to be fully appreciated, but all offer insights into the nature of true faith.

Finally, this book is amazing. This is true because it presents new discoveries and facts that are not widely known. Some unique contributions include:

- A comparison of celebrities' near death experiences
- The possible resting place for the skeleton of Leviathan
- A previously unknown pattern in Isaiah
- The riddle of Good Friday solved
- Additional evidence placing Mount Sinai in Saudi Arabia
- Ancient art placing the Red Sea at the Gulf of Aqaba
- The debunking of marriage statistics promoted by atheists
- Science that implies our reality exists in the mind of God

So for those who like to read and think, prepare to be edified, educated, and hopefully even entertained!

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# Chapter 1

## Evidence of Life after Death

*I know a man in Christ who was taken up to the third heaven fourteen years ago.... And I know that this man was taken upto paradise. I don't know if he was in his body or away from his body, but God knows. He heard things he is not able to explain, things that no human is allowed to tell. [2 Corinthians 12:2-4, NCV]*

What unusual experiences do Hollywood celebrities, American scientists, and peasants in India have in common? Members of all these groups report having had Near Death Experiences, or NDEs. While some who investigate this topic promote humanistic interpretations, here we will see that these experiences often demand a supernatural explanation and point the way to a loving God.

Many who have had close encounters with death describe events that cannot be explained by modern science. Some of the NDEs in this chapter include instances of people leaving their bodies, enabling them to observe events that transpired around their body while it was in a death-like state. Such experiences hint at a cognizance that goes beyond the ability of modern physics to explain.

My own awareness of near death experiences came at a young age. In the mid-1960s, both of my grandfathers related accounts of NDEs, and their stories included components that are common to such experiences. In fact, according to two Gallup polls, approximately fifteen percent of Americans report having had a near death experience. (Gallup, 1982). Even many celebrities report NDEs. The list includes well-known personalities such as Peter Sellers, Jane Seymour, Donald

Sutherland, Gary Busey, Richard Lawson, Eric Estrada, Burt Reynolds, Larry Hagman, and others. Some of their observations are included in this chapter. There are a vast number of NDE accounts that can be found, but by citing primarily accounts of celebrities it forces a more balanced perspective by keeping us from cherry picking only those accounts that might support a particular narrative.



*A scene that brings to mind the surreal experiences that many describe when facing death. (Photo by Nevit Dilman, Wikimedia).*

Public awareness of NDEs only became widespread after Dr. Raymond Moody published the book *Life After Life* in 1975. Although Dr. Moody avoided interpreting NDEs from a Christian perspective, his book still provides valuable testimonies that support a biblical world view. Since Dr. Moody's book, awareness has grown that such experiences are common.

Obviously, atheists challenge the validity of most aspects

of NDEs, but when they personally have one their views often change. Dr. Kenneth Ring is a prominent NDE researcher who has written extensively on the subject, and has noted that most atheists who meet God during an NDE become “convinced that they had been in the presence of some supreme and loving power” (Williams, 2007), much like the God of the Bible.

### ***The Bible and NDEs***

From Genesis on, the Bible teaches that the human spirit is separate from the body. In both Greek and Hebrew, the word *spirit* literally means *breath* or *wind*. It was God's breath that was required for the first man Adam to begin to live:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7 KJV)

Solomon also described the spirit when he concluded the book of Ecclesiastes:

Remember your Creator while you are young.... Soon your life will snap like a silver chain.... You will turn back into the dust of the earth again, but your spirit will return to God who gave it. (Ecclesiastes 12:1a, 6-7, NCV)

While this does not necessarily suggest Solomon had a near death experience, the Apostle Paul described something that certainly suggests he knew someone who had a near death experience. Some believe it is possible that Paul himself experienced one, given the number of times he cheated death. The verses I opened this chapter with seem to describe such an experience:

"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven .... And I know that this man

— whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows — was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell." (2 Corinthians 12:2-4, NIV).

If indeed Paul was being intentionally vague about his own experience, it might be that he was just trying to protect himself. After all, he notes that discussing such topics was illegal. Either way, Paul mentions several aspects that are common to near death experiences.

- The man was caught up to heaven. Many accounts include entering into the presence of a powerful, loving God.
- Paul suggests that the man may have been out of the body. Many people report leaving the body, and viewing it externally. Others report being able to travel to other places, and even other planets.
- People often report gaining a vast knowledge while they are away from the body. Paul also heard inexpressible things. Unfortunately, when people return, most of their newfound knowledge cannot be recalled, as though it is simply too vast to be contained in a physical human brain.

Yet another passage hints that Paul may have personally had such an experience. In it, he imparts the type of revelation that is commonly cited in NDE accounts:

"Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." (1 Corinthians 13:12, NIV).

But we should not automatically conclude that just because someone has had a near death experience means they are a follower of Christ. That point was driven home to me awhile

back, when someone told me about their own near death experience when he nearly drowned that had many of the aspects common to NDEs. I could only conclude that it had a supernatural origin. Yet he was quick to inform me that while it caused him to believe in life after death, he still did not believe in God. So it should be noted that just because a person has a near death experience doesn't necessarily mean they agree with our interpretation, or that it causes them to surrender their will to a supreme being.

### ***Sorting out NDEs***

Certain traits are common to most NDEs. Initially, people usually have them as the result of trauma that causes normal body functions to cease. The heart stops beating, blood stops flowing, breathing stops, and normal brain-wave activity ceases.

In general, people who have NDEs then experience a heightened sense of awareness. Afterwards, people are offended at the suggestion that it might have been a dream. Instead, they describe themselves as being fully awake and fully alert, in spite of the loss of all or most signs of life. In fact, quite often, if the experience occurs in a hospital, the patient looks down from above and witnesses a doctor pronouncing their body dead. This is how total the cessation of life is seen to be, and how supernatural their experience seems.

A well known example of a thoroughly documented NDE that included the absence of any life signs is probably that of Pam Reynolds. In order to remove a brain aneurysm, doctors intentionally lowered her core body temperature to sixty degrees, stopping her heart and lungs. All attached monitors showed no sign of life. Afterwards she was able to give a detailed account of what went on in the operating room during this period. Her account included accurate descriptions of the tools used and the words spoken. She also described traveling down a tunnel, meeting dead relatives, and facing the question as to whether she

was ready to die. (Williams, 2007).

Her experience is common. Many even tell of being able to see through walls and floors. Later, they are able to describe with accurate detail what went on, including things people said, things they did, and people who arrived and left. It is this aspect that most defies skeptic's attempts to explain away NDEs as a purely natural phenomena.

Peter Sellers described such an experience:

"Well, I felt myself leave my body. I just floated out of my physical form and I saw them cart my body away to the hospital. I went with it." (MacLaine, 1988).

Actress Jane Seymour also mentioned awareness of events in the room:

"I was looking down at my body. I was looking down. I saw this man screaming, yelling, "emergency, emergency!" ....I had two huge syringes in my backside, and I was watching from the corner of the room.....I just kind of looked, and then went, 'that's very strange. That's me. But that can't be me if I'm here.' And then I realized that I was out of my body and that I was, you know, going to die." (CNN, 2005).

### ***Celebrities Answer the Big Question***

There are also other aspects that are common to NDEs. As with Pam Reynolds, virtually all near death experiences involve a person facing the question of whether they are ready to die, or whether it is the right time. Some of the time, the question is asked by a spiritual being, such as an angel. In other cases, the person simply experiences an epiphany in which they recognize its importance.





*Actress Jane Seymour in 1994. (Alan Light, Wikimedia)*

In fact, in researching this chapter, I don't think I came across a single detailed NDE that failed to mention this, as did both of my grandfathers. This question, more than any other aspect of NDEs, suggests that the person who is dying has come under the authority of a higher power who has the ability to grant their wish.

For Peter Sellers, the question was answered for him. When Sellers tried to go toward a bright white light, he was told, "It's not time. Go back and finish. It's not time." Sellers then floated back to his body before waking up. (MacLaine, 1988).

Actress Jane Seymour described her response to the question like this:

"All of a sudden I just looked, and I went, no, no, I'm not ready to go away....And so I asked whoever was up there, God, a higher power, whatever one wants to call it, I just said, whoever you are, I will never deny your existence, just please let me get back in that body and I won't let you down....The next thing I knew, I was in my body...." (CNN, 2005).

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