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JOHN BURKE

WHO IS
THE
GOD
OF
HEAVEN?

ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT
NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES, GOD'S REVELATION,
AND THE LOVE YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED

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Who Is the God of Heaven?: Answers to Common Questions about Near-Death Experiences, God's Revelation, and the Love You've Always Wanted

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Introduction

WE ALL IMAGINE GOD. Some imagine God as a myth or a fairy tale. Others imagine God as distant and scary, like a harsh judge or demanding parent. Still others imagine God as the most beautiful, loving, benevolent being in the universe. How you and I imagine God matters because it influences us, for better or worse, more than anything else we can think about.¹ It shapes how we view ourselves, others, and our very purpose for existing. That's why getting to know God is the most important thing we can do in life.

For more than three decades, I've been learning about God through studying the Bible, studying the world's religions and history, and studying over one thousand people who have clinically died, been resuscitated, and claimed to have experienced life after death.

WHO IS THE GOD OF HEAVEN?

Over the years, I became convinced that God is definitely real. Even more than that, God is relatable, and he is good! I believe that through near-death experiences, God is giving our global village evidence not only of his reality but also of the relentless and unconditional love he has for every single person on the planet. What I'm presenting can shed light on the most important questions of life: Who created me? For what purpose? What really matters? What is God like? What does God want with me?

Maybe you're going through a difficult time of illness or other suffering, and you question if God cares—or if he even exists. Perhaps you've lost a loved one, and in your grief you doubt that there really is life after death. Maybe you struggle with guilt and regret for choices in your past and wonder if you can be forgiven. Or perhaps you want to share hope with someone who is hurting.

Whatever your situation, I hope this little booklet, adapted from my full-length book *Imagine the God of Heaven*, will help you better understand the wonders of God: his epic story, his captivating character, and his love that is beyond our wildest dreams. Most of all, my hope is that you'll realize that all the love you've ever wanted, ultimately, is found in relationship with God.

What are near-death experiences (NDEs), and why should we study them?

Wayne is an aerospace engineer and lawyer in Australia who had a horribly painful heart attack. He floated out of his body, into a tunnel of light, and after traveling a great distance, he emerged:

Into his presence, brighter than ten thousand suns—and I'm transfixed! It is awesomely beautiful. And I can see down into this light. At the center is the form of a man, arms outstretched towards me, like to welcome me and to hug me. At that moment, I entered, I merged with the light, and the light merged with me. Like when Jesus said, I am in you, and you in me [John 17:21]. I was like a glass container being filled up, filled up, filled up with him. And I was experiencing the most ecstatic love. It was bliss beyond belief, rapture beyond reason, ecstasy beyond explanation—love times a billion—but our word *love* fails so badly. Imagine every loving relationship combined all together, then blow them up billions of times all of that.²

WHO IS THE GOD OF HEAVEN?

Since the age of modern medical resuscitation and access to digital communication, more and more reports have surfaced across the globe about people being brought back from clinical death. A Gallup poll found that eight million Americans have had a near-death experience.³ Oftentimes, people have a cardiac arrest, no heartbeat, and no brain waves, and yet modern medicine (or miracle) brings them back after minutes to hours of no registered brain activity. They come back to testify about an experience they say was more real than anything they have ever experienced on earth.

Every NDE is unique, just as every individual life experience is unique. Yet, despite the uniqueness and cultural filters of each, NDE accounts from around the globe share striking similarities, including often demonstrating a consistent order of common events. For instance, NDErs often observe their own resuscitation through an out-of-body perspective, travel through a tunnel or pathway, experience heightened sensations (such as brilliant new colors), feel overwhelming peace, see deceased friends or family members, and undergo a life review in the presence of a God of Light and Love.

What are these accounts? Are they actual scientific evidence for the soul and for God's existence? Or can

NDEs be explained by natural means, like the effects of a dying brain or anoxia or drugs?

Over the past thirty-five years, I've interviewed countless individuals and studied thousands of NDE reports trying to answer these questions. I've since become convinced that NDEs are God's gift to our world—evidence of God's great love for all people. That same evidence has also convinced many skeptical doctors over the years. I believe NDEs can help people who don't believe in God see that he's real, and they give color to the picture God has already revealed in the Bible.