

THE PASSAGE

From Death to Life

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Dr. B. L.
Scurlock

The Passage: From Death to Life

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FOREWORD

This book is based upon my father's Near Death Experience (NDE), my mother's Out of Body Experience (OBE), as I perceived it at her funeral celebration and graveside service, as well as stemming from my own background, educational preparation and religious faith. Many of the people I have interviewed, as well as those I've only read about, do not share my religious views. I have not changed their stories to fit my particular beliefs in any way, but from time to time I have given my opinion and personal views about their experiences. At the end of each person's NDE or OBE, I have summarized those aspects I believe to be consistent with other experiences, as well as what I believe to be true.

In the final analysis, after you have searched your own heart and mind, it will be up to you, the reader, to accept what you believe to be true. However, there are certain experiences that appear to be true of all people who have had NDEs or OBEs.

Before I go on, let me tell you a little about myself: I was raised as a Christian and attended the same Southern Baptist Church my mother attended. I attended North Greenville Junior College (a Baptist school) and graduated from Stetson University, a largely Baptist University with a BA in religion. After graduating from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary with a M.R.E. degree in theology, counseling and religious education, I received a Doctor of

Dr. B. L. Scurlock

Education degree from the University of Miami, majoring in instructional leadership and with a minor in music education. I served as a public school teacher for 31 years, retiring in 1997. I also have served as a pastor, music and youth director and part-time music director for more than 40 years in Baptist churches. I believe that I have a searching-for- the-truth attitude in theology.

That said, I hope that all of you who are near the beginning of your passage, age wise, find this book a comfort and guide as you prepare for your voyage. I also hope that those of you who have experienced a NDE will find inspiration and a clear direction towards the "Light." I truly trust that those who are young enough to seem far from your passage (although no one really knows when their passage will begin) will prepare for that moment of departure with joyful anticipation. I, personally am looking forward to this awesome, other-dimensional existence as an opportunity to grow intellectually, emotionally and spiritually as I stand in the presence of the father, Jesus, the prophets, friends and family who've gone on before, and the host of all (including millions of spiritual beings) who have concluded life here on earth and have traveled to the other side to spend EONS of time rejoicing because of our arrival at our eternal home!

I want to point out that those who have shared their NDE were not doing so trying to put forth a theological dogma. They were reporting a life-changing experience. They are not interested in outlining any religion's step-by-step process of attaining immortality. My father, for example, knew nothing of what Baptists believe or what the Church of Christ believes, or what any other religious institution believes. He simply wanted to share with me the exciting, awesome, humbling experience he'd had and the newly-discovered fact that death is not the end.

THE PASSAGE: FROM DEATH TO LIFE

I remember a class while I was attending the Seminary where we studied the Old Testament. When the professor got to the book of Isaiah he talked about prophecy and the end time. I got very curious and asked him what life after this life would be like. His answer was, "I don't know. The Lord put me on the preparation committee, not the program committee. I don't care what the program will be like when we get there. Whatever the program is, I'll be perfectly happy."

My question wasn't answered, and I was disappointed, because I truly did want to know what life after this one would be like! Even today, if I can get a glimpse of what it will be like from someone who's been there and back - - I want to know! My mother always told me that I was very curious and couldn't wait for things. But it's curiosity that causes us to search for as much of the truth as we can possibly know. This longing for the truth about the afterlife propelled me to write this book. And on we go!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book had its genesis in the 1950s, when God spoke to me in a vision, asking if I would dedicate my life to sharing His love with all who would listen. I answered "yes" to that wonderful calling. My college preparation, seminary training, doctoral studies, and life service has been dedicated to fulfilling this commitment. After serving as a minister, music director and teacher these 40 years, I have been given places of service that enabled me to "run the race" and "finish the course" of my life's purpose.

For many years I have believed that there was more than just this life to experience, more awaiting us in eternity, and a definite method of transportation from this world to the afterlife awaiting us. Until my turn comes I'll continue to fulfill this call from God whether it be through singing, teaching, or writing.

I wish to thank those who have contributed to my life's experiences. While there are too many to remember across the years (forgive me), I do want to mention a few. My daughter, Teresa Hall, has been helpful through her sharing of insights concerning the Christian application of near death experiences. My son, Bobby Scurlock, a senior Physics and Philosophy major at the University of Florida, helped me understand Stephen Hawking's theories of space -- time, worm holes and black holes.

I want to express my gratitude to those whom I have interviewed for their willingness to share their near death

Dr. B. L. Scurlock

experiences. The experiences of those I reviewed through literature have cast further light on the total picture of what constitutes a near death experience or an out of body experience. I owe them, also, a great debt of gratitude.

Kevin Williams and Lori Tostado have helped a great deal by sharing their research material. I appreciate their willingness to share the information they have gathered.

I want to thank Dr. Howard Eliason and Dr. Dave Powers, two colleagues at Miami Dade Community College. They have been a source of encouragement and help as I shared with them my dream of writing this chronology. The pastor of my church, Rev. Guillermo Escalona, has been a source of inspiration and help as he shared with me his spiritual insights. I owe them a debt of gratitude and I hope that the readers of **The Passage** will find a renewed purpose and direction in their earthly lives as well as in the anticipation of eternal joy in the life which is to come!

Contents

FOREWORD		<i>iii</i>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		<i>vii</i>
INTRODUCTION		<i>xi</i>
CHAPTER 1	The Beginning	1
CHAPTER 2	Out of Body	22
CHAPTER 3	The Passageway	42
CHAPTER 4	The Travelers	58
CHAPTER 5	The Brilliant Light	78
CHAPTER 6	The Being of Light	93
CHAPTER 7	The Life In Review	113
CHAPTER 8	Heaven, Place of Eternal Peace	140
CHAPTER 9	The Return	158
CHAPTER 10	More Experiences	183
CHAPTER 11	Until Then	204
CHAPTER 12	Going Home	215
APPENDIX I		228
BIBLIOGRAPHY		250

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Raymond Moody has written several books about near-death experiences, including **Life After Life** and **Reflections On Life After Life**. After 11 years of inquiry into the near-death experience, Dr. Moody outlines the following nine elements that generally occur during the experience:

1. A buzzing or ringing noise, accompanied by a sense of being dead.
2. Peace and painlessness. People may experience intense pain while they are dying, but as soon as they leave the body the pain vanishes and they experience peace.
3. Out-of-body experience. The dying often have the sensation of rising up and floating above their own bodies which are surrounded by a medical team. They are watching it from above, feeling comfortable. They experience the feeling of being in a spiritual body that looks like a living energy field.
4. The tunnel experience. The next experience is that of being drawn into darkness through a tunnel, at an extremely high speed, until reaching a realm of radiant golden-white light.
5. Rising rapidly into the heavens. Instead of a tunnel, some people report rising suddenly into the heavens and seeing the earth and the celestial sphere as they would be seen by astronauts in space.
6. People of light. Once on the other side of the tunnel, or after they have risen into the heavens, the dying meet people

Dr. B. L. Scurlock

who glow with an inner light. Often friends and relatives who have died before them are there to greet them.

7. The Being of Light. After meeting the people of light, the dying often meet a powerful spiritual being whom some have called God, Jesus, or an angel. Also, although they sometimes report being scared, they do not report sensing that they were on their way to hell or that they fell into it. (Many have seen hell or a place or plane of darkness, especially those who have tried to commit suicide.*).

8. The life review. The Being of Light presents the dying person with a panoramic review of everything he or she has done during the lifetime just past. In particular, every action they have ever taken toward other people is relived, and the person comes away feeling that love is the most important thing in life.

9. Reluctance to return. The Being of Light sometimes tells the dying that they must return to life. Other times, the dying person is given a choice of staying or returning. In either case, the dying are reluctant to return to this life. Those who choose to return do so only because of loved ones they do not wish to leave behind.

** My opinion after talking to and reading about those who actually saw a place of eternal darkness.*

Dr. B. L. Scurlock, Professor

CHAPTER 1

The Beginning

My Dad

On a cold winter night, a few hours before dawn, the phone woke me with a jolt. "You must come quickly!" a woman's voice said with urgency. "Your father has had a very serious heart attack and we're not sure at this point about his recovery, but it doesn't look good."

As pastor of a mission church in Fayetteville, North Carolina, situated next to a federal housing project, I was used to dealing with a variety of problems at all hours of the night. But I wasn't ready for this one.

The journey to Nashville, across the Great Smoky Mountains, seemed to take an eternity. . . up the mountain -- down the other side -- up again. Finally, I stopped and called the hospital to find out if there was any further news. I learned that my dad had suffered a coronary thrombosis -- a hole had been blown in his heart. The nurse I spoke with encouraged me to get to the hospital as soon as possible.

At the hospital, Dr. Pomoroy greeted me and carefully explained my father's serious condition. "I give him a 50-50 chance if he survives the next 24 hours," the doctor stated. I was stunned to hear that my father had been clinically dead for nearly five minutes. "I had to jump up on the gurney and pound him on the chest to resuscitate him," Dr. Pomoroy told me. After five minutes of this little man's intense efforts, my father's heart had begun beating again.

Dr. B. L. Scurlock

When my father recovered enough to talk with me, his countenance was entirely different. There was a smile on his face and he was surrounded by a pervading sense of peace that I had never seen before. As he began to share with me what happened during those five minutes when he was "gone," I realized that the experience had totally changed his life forever.

He spoke of a tunnel and a beautiful light at the end of it. "I felt extremely peaceful as I started through the tunnel -- not walking but just moving, without effort.

"I was very disappointed when I was awakened," he went on, "because I didn't want to come back to this earth life. I wanted to stay where I was."

As he reviewed his near death experience (NDE) he talked of other beings there with him, and of the beautiful music. "It seemed to be everywhere!" he said. Dad believed that a purpose existed for his return to this world and after his recovery he became an usher in a church, a job he attended to faithfully for the rest of his life. He was convinced that when it was his time to leave he would once again begin the passage to an eternity of endless joy!

My father, who seemed to have little reason to live other than taking care of his daily responsibilities, found in his NDE a reason and direction for life here on earth and a burning desire for life once again in the place he had experienced for five minutes. He had been there and seen it. Clyde Jones Scurlock, my truly changed father, has since made his passage. I feel certain that at this moment he is experiencing that eternal place of unending joy!

My fascination with, belief in and subsequent research concerning the passage from this life into an eternal life (perhaps in a parallel universe or another dimension) has

THE PASSAGE: FROM DEATH TO LIFE

brought me to this time of sharing. This book chronicles more than 35 NDEs and OBEs experienced by people I've interviewed. I trust that **The Passage** will reaffirm the faith of others who read this book, whether they have had a NDE or not. I am sure that on the day when all of us begin our passage, if we have prepared for the trip, we will find a place of joy unspeakable and a peace unending that we will celebrate across the eons of time.

Jane Smith

Jane Smith was in labor with her second baby when she experienced clinical death. At the beginning point of her death, she felt something leave her body with a gentle "whoosh" that passed up through the top of her head. She found herself standing in a gray mist realizing that she was truly dead. Into this gray mist came a brilliant white light that infiltrated her field of consciousness. This light brought with it the most incredible feeling of absolute love, total safety, and total protection. She felt enveloped in it, almost cradled by this light that was so dynamic it was almost palpable. She remembered feeling extremely overjoyed and thrilled because even though she was clinically dead she was very much alive! She was truly ready to begin her passage! As she existed in this white light, in this incredible love, she began to feel rapturous. The rapture and bliss continued to build. Her consciousness began to expand with the wonder of it all. Suddenly, there came into her consciousness an entire field of knowledge. A whole block of knowledge had simply come in and settled itself on her. "What normally took several sentences to tell came to me in only one piece," she recalled. "At that moment I knew that I was immortal, eternal, indestructible -- that I'd always been, that I would always be,

Dr. B. L. Scurlock

and that there was no way in the world that I could ever be lost.

"I really believed that it was impossible for me to fall into a crack in the universe somewhere and never be heard of again. I just knew that I was utterly safe and always had been, forever and ever."

When Jane's first block of knowledge was digested, another one came. With the second block, she understood that the universe runs according to a perfect plan. Everything that we think about -- as hard as it is to understand or as unfair or cruel as it may seem at the time -- was without meaning. The things we worry about shouldn't concern us at all. There is a perfect plan and that plan is working itself out in its perfection.

With this knowledge, Jane became more blissful, more rapturous, more ecstatic. She was being filled with the joy and love present in the light. The dynamics of this light were overflowing with love, joy and knowledge. It filled Jane with ecstasy.

She had lost all sense of having a body. She was just her consciousness, pure and free-floating. She had no thoughts. She was a receiving station. She merely felt and absorbed and took in. Then, suddenly, her first thought occurred: she wondered how much more of this she could stand before she shattered. With that, the universe began to recede. She accepted this, untroubled, concluding that the universe would not shatter. Jane understood that we simply cannot take in more of this bliss and joy than we are able to handle at a time!

As the light began to recede, Jane's rapture also began to dissipate. For a couple of seconds, she could not

THE PASSAGE: FROM DEATH TO LIFE

remember what was going on. "I don't know how I got here. I can't remember what's going on," she thought.

Jane didn't know if she had been in that light for a minute or a hundred years. She thought that the force of all energy just produced a condition in her of amnesia for a couple of seconds. But that was not allowed to last very long.

A Beautiful Meadow

Within a second or two, Jane felt herself standing in an absolutely beautiful green meadow. She knew then what was going on. She knew once again who she was and that she had died. Her amnesia was over.

Jane stood there in this gorgeous meadow and remembered that the light there was different from the light on earth. There was a Godliness to this light and the sky was very blue. The colors were extraordinary and the green of the meadow was fantastic! Flowers were blooming all around with colors she had never seen before. Jane also saw a soft light glowing within every living thing. She felt that she was seeing the very life inside of everything.

After looking at this exquisite sight, she began to walk. It was then that she saw about 20 people standing on a hill. They were dressed in very simple, Grecian-type robes. There were more men than women, which seemed to be of no concern.

Jane thought, "Oh, I want to talk with them." It seemed that she was beside them, on the side of the hill almost immediately. She couldn't tell if she had glided there or had only had to think of being there for the move to have occurred. At any rate, the move to the hill was effortless.

The Moment of Truth

Over the top of the hill Jane could see a city. Several men came to her and she told them, "I know what's

Dr. B. L. Scurlock

happened. I realize that I am dead. I know what's going on." One man in the group did all the talking. He was much taller than the others and wore a purple robe. He had an absolutely marvelous face – a kind, noble and spiritual face. He also wore an aura of authority, so Jane felt like she could trust him completely. He told her that she would not be staying there. It wasn't time for her to be there yet.

When Jane and the tall man conversed, it was without moving their mouths. It was a mental transmission. She only had to have the impulse that contained the things that she wanted to say and he immediately understood and answered her. Even though he was not moving his mouth, she heard the sound of his voice in her inner ear. Jane thought to him, "Everything that's happened to me since I crossed over is so beautiful. Everything is so perfect. What about my sins?" He replied, "There are no sins, not the way you think on earth. The only thing that has meaning is what you think."

He asked, "What is in your heart?" Then in some incredible way that Jane did not understand at all, she was able to look deeply inside herself, to the very core of her essence, where there was love. Nothing else. Her core was perfect love, loving perfection. She had complete love and acceptance for everything. She saw her own gentleness, tenderness, harmlessness. She simply was perfect and loving.

Jane continued excitedly, "Can you tell me what everything is all about -- the whole world -- everything?" "Yes," he said, and told her the answer in only three sentences. It was so simple. She understood everything immediately. She had total comprehension of what he was telling her.

THE PASSAGE: FROM DEATH TO LIFE

Unfortunately, to this day she can't recall exactly what he said. She asked of him "Since I'm not going to be able to stay, there are so many people I want to take this back to. May I take all of this with me?" He answered "You may take the answer to the first question back, the one about sins, but you are not going to remember the answer to the second one."

The next thing Jane knew, she was experiencing a tremendous banging in her head. It was loud, fast and irritating. It went on for a few seconds -- a loud "bang, bang, bang," followed by an electronic click in her ear that sounded almost like a tape recorder. With that "click," she was back. She opened her eyes to see her doctor standing over her, doing something extremely uncomfortable to her body.

Jane has never been able to remember the specific two or three sentences the man had given in answer to her questions about "the whole world." She has tried, with great effort, to remember all the years since this NDE, especially as she lay in bed the night of her "return."

Though she has not been able to remember the exact words, she thinks she knows the essence of what he was telling her. She knows that it has to do with love. She believes that it has to do with what she was able to see when he said, "What is in your heart?" Jane looked inside herself and saw that she was perfect love – and that perfection applies to all human beings. That is what we are. That is our core. This love, this perfection, this Godliness.

She believes that the world will keep turning, spinning on forever, and that we all have these experiences. She believes that as we bring that knowledge into our consciousness and have it remain there all the time, our connection with God will be there, instead of buried