

Evidence from Non-believers

The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus into the Apostle Paul

In the days after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, in Acts 7: 54-60, an unruly mob rose up against a believer named Stephen. This mob stoned Stephen to death, making Stephen the very first martyr for Christ and began a great persecution against the church at Jerusalem. Standing in this crowd, approving of the action if not actively participating in it, was a man named Saul of Tarsus. Saul was a VERY religious man, very active in his Jewish faith and very active in capturing and turning these new believers over to authorities to be put to death.

However, in Acts 9, as he was on the road to Damascus, Saul saw the light—literally! “. . . suddenly, a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ ” It was Jesus (Acts 9: 4-19), who temporarily blinded him and gave him instructions of what to do next. This miraculous encounter with Jesus was much more than a vision. The resurrected Christ actually appeared to Saul (1 Cor 9:1; 15:8), and Saul became the Apostle Paul, who founded churches, wrote much of the New Testament, and ultimately died for his faith. What a wonderful story is this conversion of Saul, persecutor of the church, into the Apostle Paul!

New International Version (NIV)

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Is It Safe To Die??

In my days as a teacher in the community college, students observed my interest in matters related to the Bible, and they often brought me relevant, sometimes irrelevant, information. One time I recall that a student brought me a Spiritualist book, obviously NOT a Christian book and NOT written from a Christian viewpoint. I decided to take a look at the book, just to see what the “other side” had to say. One paragraph was of great interest to me. The author cited an article from the Parapsychology Review, definitely NOT a Christian source, as evidence from a NON-Christian physician, about what this NON-Christian author had to say about devils and light. “A heart specialist from Chattanooga, Tennessee, has just finished a study of more than 100 patients brought back to life after being clinically dead. ‘The good news,’ he said, ‘is that some of them had a blissful encounter with a being of light.’ The bad news, however, is that over half of the patients had a perfectly appalling time, walking through dimly-lit caverns. . . The doctor now firmly believes hell exists. ‘Reluctantly,’ he said, ‘I have come to the conclusion it may not be safe to die.’”

According to the Bible, after death comes the judgment, which in general is probably an absolutely terrifying experience! The “being of light” that was experienced by some was probably the Lord Jesus Christ or a messenger of light from Him. The “dimly-lit caverns” were probably waiting places in lonely, solitary confinement awaiting the Judgment before being cast into outer darkness or into the Lake of Fire that was prepared for the devil and the fallen angels that joined him in rebellion against God.

The doctor is probably correct—it is not safe to die! That is, it is not safe to die for those who have lived their lives rejecting Christ, choosing selfishness and wickedness for their lifestyles. However, some people (i.e., those who know Jesus, who have accepted Jesus’ sacrifice on Calvary, and whose sins are forgiven!), will be welcomed to a Heavenly home prepared by Jesus himself (John 14: 1-4).

If you were in an out-of-body experience, in a dark place, and suddenly a bright light appeared before you, calling YOUR name! Would you run TOWARDS the light, or would you run AWAY from the light, choosing to hide in the darkness? What would YOU do? There is no reason to believe everyone will experience a “blissful encounter with a being of light,” but if His name is Jesus and He knows YOUR name, will you recognize His voice???

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