

Questions About People Seeing Dead Loved Ones at Their Deathbed and Last Breath

By Pastor Ed Anderson

When people are on their death beds sometimes they tend to say they see their loved ones could that be good or bad before they take their last breath?

Answer:

This is a profound and tender question that touches both the **spiritual** and **emotional** realities of death.

When Dying People See Loved Ones — What Does It Mean?

1. A Common Phenomenon at Life's End

Across many cultures and religions, it's not uncommon for dying individuals to report:

- Seeing **deceased loved ones**
- Speaking to **invisible figures**
- Describing **beautiful places or light**
- Reaching out to someone unseen

These moments often occur in the **hours or days** before death. Medical professionals call this the “**deathbed vision**” or “**end-of-life vision.**”

2. Is It Good or Bad? Spiritual vs. Medical Perspectives

Medical Explanation:

- The brain, in its final moments, may create vivid hallucinations due to **oxygen deprivation, chemical changes**, or medications.
- Yet many doctors and hospice workers note that these visions often **bring peace** and **aren't random or distressing** like typical hallucinations.

Spiritual Explanation:

- Many Christians and believers interpret these moments as:
- A **comforting grace** from God
- A glimpse of **what awaits beyond**
- **Angels** or **heavenly beings** sent to prepare the soul

- Some even view them as **God's mercy** to assure the dying they are not alone.

Hebrews 1:14 — *“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”*

Could It Ever Be Bad?

In rare cases, people report **frightening visions** before death. This could mean:

- Unresolved **spiritual conflict**
- **Guilt or fear** over sin
- The enemy trying to sow **fear at the end of life**

But remember: **Satan is the deceiver**, and **God is the Redeemer**. Even at death's door, a person can still **turn to Christ and find peace**.

What Should We Do or Say?

If you're with someone experiencing this:

- Stay calm, warm, and present
- Ask gentle questions: *“Who do you see?”* or *“Do they bring you peace?”*
- If appropriate, **pray aloud**, read Scripture, or play worship music
- **Affirm God's love** and the hope of resurrection

Romans 8:38–39 — *“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life...shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Final Thought: God's Mercy in the Final Moments

God is often closest at the edge of eternity. Whether those visions are spiritual or neurological, if they bring peace, it may be a final **gift of grace**.

Recap: What Many Experience at Death

As shared earlier, many dying individuals report seeing:

- Deceased family members
- Glowing figures
- Angelic voices or heavenly light
- Beautiful, peaceful places

Now, let's examine what **the Bible teaches about death** and how these two realities can fit together—or possibly clash.

What the Bible Teaches About Death

1. Death is a Sleep (Not a Conscious Journey Yet)

The Bible consistently describes death as a **sleep-like state** — a peaceful, unconscious rest.

Ecclesiastes 9:5 – *“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing...”*

Psalms 146:4 – *“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”*

John 11:11–14 – Jesus called Lazarus's death “*sleep*” until He raised him.

This view means that **humans do not ascend to heaven or descend to hell** immediately upon death. Instead, they “sleep” until the **resurrection** at Christ's second coming.

2. Resurrection Is Our Hope, Not Disembodied Life

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 – *“The dead in Christ shall rise first...”*

John 5:28–29 – *“All that are in the graves shall hear His voice and come forth...”*

This places the hope not in **floating in heaven** after death, but in the **bodily resurrection** when Jesus returns.

3. Satan Can Masquerade as an Angel of Light

2 Corinthians 11:14 – *“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”*

If the dead are unconscious, then any *appearance* of deceased loved ones before death could potentially be:

- A **comforting neurological effect**, or
- A **spiritual deception**, especially if the message contradicts Scripture

Reconciling Deathbed Visions with Biblical Death

So... how can people see loved ones if the dead “know nothing”?

Three possibilities emerge:

1. God’s Grace Through the Dying Brain

Some experiences may be purely neurological, but **God still uses them** to comfort the dying. He can work even through the failing physical body to bring peace in the final moments.

2. Spiritual Comfort Through Angelic Presence

While the dead are asleep, **angels are active** in both life and death.

Hebrews 1:14 – *“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”*

Perhaps God allows some **form of comforting presence** that feels like a loved one, but is in fact a divine messenger.

3. Deceptions in Some Cases

Not every experience is from God. Scripture warns about **lying spirits** (1 Kings 22:22) and deceptive signs, especially in the last days.

Final Takeaway: Walk By Faith, Not Sight

End-of-life visions should never override clear biblical teaching. But we also acknowledge that **God is merciful** in the final moments of life. Whether it’s through:

- A whispered prayer
- A loved one’s presence
- A peaceful “vision”

God often gives **peace to the dying** — not because of mystical powers or afterlife journeys, but because **He is near to those who call on Him**.

Psalms 116:15 – *“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”*