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Near-Death Experiences

Reflections [Covenant and Doctrine](#) 18 September 2026

[Luke 7:11-15](#)

[Luke 8:41-42, 49-55](#)

[John 11:1-44](#)

[Revelation 1:1](#)

Let me begin with a disclaimer. I have read with interest the cases of near-death experiences reported in the media, but I have carried out no serious research on the subject myself. Nonetheless, let me set down my own thoughts, in the hope of provoking some serious discussion in this forum.

There have been only a few isolated cases of near-death experiences reported in India; otherwise, what we hear is drawn almost entirely from Western countries. One reason for this may be that a near-death experience does not sit easily with the Hindu belief in rebirth. Come to think of it, there have also been a number of cases of claimed rebirth reported from various parts of India, though in most such cases the facts suggest some form of psychological dissociation. For my own part, I never believed in rebirth as it is understood in the Hindu faith, even in the days when I stood on the periphery of the Christian faith.

Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain from the dead (Luke 7:11-15), the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Luke 8:41-42, 49-55), and Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44). These are the instances reported to us in the Gospels, besides the resurrection of Jesus Himself, which is not the same as the other three, since all three of those raised died again in due course. In none of these three cases do we read of any near-death experience reported by those who were raised from the dead. Jesus offered salvation, and a life of glory with Him in His new creation, in Heaven; He could have used them as living witnesses to tell others what that life is like, and many more might then have believed Him. Some wish to believe that John had a near-death experience, or something akin to one, when he wrote the Book of Revelation, though his own opening words are: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Revelation 1:1).

For the sake of argument, even if we accept the claims of those who say they have had a near-death experience, their experience reveals nothing new compared with what we already expect in the presence of Jesus Christ. He is the light; He is forgiveness; He is compassion; He is love and peace. The experience of complete peace and love in His glorious presence is exactly what we, as believers, expect when we cross over. No one who claims to have gone through a near-death experience has seen or felt anything substantially beyond that. That such experiences are also reported by non-believers is not, therefore, surprising. I hold the admittedly contentious view that all will be saved. How Jesus would bring that about is beyond me, and I need not know it.

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