



What Dying Is Like

Lesson Overview

1. NDE's

NDE's affirm Emanuel Swedenborg's experiences.

2. Watch a Video

Watch *BBC Interviews 8 yo Crystal and Dr. Morse* at bit.ly/GCEDCrystal (3min 12sec).

3. Read

Swedenborg experienced what it was like to die and wake up in the spiritual world so he could tell us about it. p. 1-2

4. Re-enact

Re-enact Swedenborg's experience of dying and waking up in the spiritual world.

New Church Concept Resuscitation

After the spirit is separated from the body, the spirit continues in the body for a short time, but only until the heart's action has completely ceased.... As soon as this motion ceases the person is resuscitated; but this is done by the Lord alone. Resuscitation means the drawing forth of the spirit from the body and its introduction into the spiritual world. This is commonly called the resurrection. See *Heaven and Hell* 447

FaithBuilder 1 | Lesson 5 | Eternal Life

What Can We Learn from Near Death Experiences?

Occasionally people have dreams or Near Death Experiences (NDE) that help them feel close to the spiritual world. Sometimes these experiences change their lives, giving them a renewed sense of purpose and conviction that life will continue after death. Doctors have documented some NDE and verify that the experiences happened at a time when the person could not have been conscious. Although not the same as dying, these experiences affirm Emanuel Swedenborg's experience of what it is like to die and be raised up into the spiritual world.

Watch a Video

Watch *BBC Interviews 8yo Crystal and Dr. Morse* (3min 12sec) at bit.ly/GCEDCrystal. Insert bitly link in the top browser bar on your screen. Bitly links are case and space sensitive.

1. What did Crystal experience?
2. What impact has Crystal's experience had on her life?
3. What purposes might a NDE serve for the person who experiences it, and for others who hear about it?

Read

Death occurs when the lungs and heart stop working and a person's spirit is separated from his or her earthly body. Once the body has completely stopped functioning the Lord resuscitates the person (see sidebar on left). For rather than dying, a person continues to live in a body composed of spiritual substance. The Lord allowed Swedenborg to experience the process of resuscitation so he could report what happens.

First the Lord sends the highest or celestial angels to be with the person who has died. These are the angels who love the Lord above all else, and they tenderly care for people who are in the process of dying. They look into the person's face, silently sharing their thoughts. When the person responds by receiving these thoughts, the celestial angels know that the person's spirit is ready to be with-

The angels first try to find out what the spirit's thoughts are. The thoughts of those who are dying are usually about eternal life. They want to keep the spirit's mind in those thoughts. *Heaven and Hell* 249

drawn from the physical body.

The celestial angels do not leave until the spirit of a person resists their presence. Then spiritual angels come to take their place. These angels appear to roll a covering from the left eye towards the nose which opens the eye and allows the

When a Person Dies

When a person passes from the natural world into the spiritual, he takes with him everything that belongs to him as a person, except his earthly body. He is in a body as he was in the world that seems no different to him. But his body is then spiritual. He thinks that he is in the same body that he had in the world and does not know that he has died.

A person's spirit enjoys every sense that he enjoyed in the world. He sees, hears and speaks as before. He smells, tastes, and when touched, he feels the touch as before. He also longs, desires, thinks, reflects, loves, and wills as before. And someone who loves studying, reads and writes as before.

When a person passes from one life into the other, or from one world into the other it is as if he moves from one place into another. He also carries with him his natural memory, remembering everything that he has heard, seen, read, learned, or thought, in the world from his infancy to the end of his life. See *Heaven and Hell* 461

There is a great difference between a person's life in the spiritual world and his life in the natural world in regard to his senses and affections. Those in heaven have more exquisite senses—keener sight and hearing—and think more wisely than when they were in the world.... This difference is like the difference between clear sunshine and dark cloudiness in the world. See *Heaven and Hell* 462

person, who is now a spirit, to sense a dim heavenly light—like the kind of light we see through our eyelids when we first wake up. Then the person feels like something is being gently rolled off the face, and then he or she passes from natural thought into spiritual thought.

The angels take the greatest care to shield the awakening person from any concept that does not partake of love. Then they tell the individual that he or she is a spirit and they do everything for the newly arrived spirit that they could wish for in that state. They teach the person about the realities of the other life. See *Heaven and Hell* 450

No matter how a person has died, the Lord ensures that the resurrection process is a gentle transition from life in the natural world to that of the spiritual world.

Re-enactment of Waking up in the Spiritual World

Emanuel Swedenborg was led by the Lord through the process of dying and waking up in the spiritual world so that people could learn what it will be like. This experience is told several times in the Writings. This account is adapted from *Heaven and Hell* 445-450.

Preparing for the Re-enactment

This activity requires 4-7 people. One person reads the script while others listen and re-enact the resuscitation, taking the parts of the person who is being resuscitated, the angels, and other spirits mentioned. For small groups, people may need to assume several roles. For larger groups, people may need to take turns with various roles.

Resuscitation from the Dead and Entrance into Eternal Life

When someone's body is no longer able to do its work in the natural world...a person is said to die. This takes place when the breathing of the lungs and the beating of the heart stop. But the person does not die. He or she is merely separated from the bodily part that was of use to him in the world. The person himself continues to live....

After the spirit first begins to be separated from the body, the spirit continues in the body for a short time. But only until the heart's action completely stops. This happens in different ways, depending on how someone dies. With some the motion of the heart continues for some time, with others for not so long. As soon as this motion stops the person is resuscitated.... "Resuscitation" means drawing forth the spirit from the body, and introducing it into the spiritual world. This is commonly called "the resurrection."

I have been told how this resuscitation happens and shown it by living experience. The Lord gave me this actual experience so that I might know all about how it happens.

When a person dies angels from the celestial kingdom are present with their spirit, some at a distance, and two sitting near the spirit's head....

Resuscitation from the Dead and Entrance into Eternal Life (continued)

I was in this state for some hours. Then the other spirits that are around go away, thinking that the person is dead.

I smelled a fragrant odor. When celestial angels are present everything about a spirit who has just left the world smells that way. And when other spirits perceive that they cannot come near. In this way evil spirits are kept away from our spirits when they are being introduced into eternal life.

The angels sitting at the person's head are silent. They merely share their thoughts with a person. And when their thoughts are received the angels know that the person's spirit is ready to be drawn forth from the body. This sharing of their thoughts is brought about by looking into the face, for in heaven thoughts are shared in this way.

The angels first try to find out what the spirit's thoughts are. The thoughts of those who are dying are usually about eternal life. They want to keep the spirit's mind in those thoughts.

I especially noticed and felt a pulling and drawing forth, as it were, of the inner parts of my mind, thus of my spirit, from the body. I was told that this is from the Lord.

The celestial angels who are with the person that is resuscitated do not withdraw from him or her, because they love every one. But when the spirit comes into such a state that he or she can no longer be with celestial angels, he or she longs to get away from them.

When this takes place angels from the Lord's spiritual kingdom come. Through them the use of light is given. For before this the spirit saw nothing, but merely thought. I was shown how this is done.

The angels appeared to roll off, as it were, a coating from the left eye towards the bridge of the nose. This is to open the eye and enable it to see. This is only an appearance, but to the spirit it really seems to be done.

When the coating seems to have been rolled off, the spirit senses light slightly, but a very dim light, like what we see through our eyelids when we first wake up from sleep. To me this dim light took on a heavenly color, but I was told afterwards that the color varies.

Then the spirit feels that something is being gently rolled off from the face. And when this is done spiritual thought is awakened. This rolling off from the face is also an appearance, which represents the spirit's passing from natural thought into spiritual thought.

The angels are extremely careful that only such ideas as savor of love will come out of the person who's being resuscitated.

They now tell the person that he or she is a spirit. When the person has come into the enjoyment of light the spiritual angels render to the new spirit every service he or she can possibly want in that state. And they teach the person about the things of the other life so far as he or she can understand them.