

The Science Of The Human Soul And The Supernatural Realm

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It is written:

“The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him:” (Zechariah 12:1)

Over the years, I have been blessed to work with many people who reject belief in the supernatural realm. However, the matter of the supernatural realm is trivial when we come to understand what the Bible teaches about the matter. You see, if the Bible is the Word of God, and if the Bible teaches that the supernatural realm exists, then it exists. The Bible is the Word of God (numerous evidences document this claim), and the Bible clearly teaches that the supernatural realm exists (cf. Ephesians 6:10-12). Therefore, the supernatural realm exists.

However, it is helpful to notice some of the ways that modern scientific evidence confirms the testimony of Scripture. That such confirmation exists makes sense, since nature is God’s general revelation to mankind (Romans 1:18-20; Acts 14:17; Job 12:7-10) just as much as Scripture is (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

With that in mind, let me introduce you to Eben Alexander III. He is a very interesting man!

Being a world-renowned neurosurgeon, he was intrigued by the mystery of consciousness. However, because he had been throughly school in materialism (i.e., the belief that “matter” is all that exists), he had a difficult time believing in the existence of God or the spiritual realm.

As he recounts:

“As much as I’d grown up wanting to believe in God and Heaven and an afterlife, my decades in the rigorous scientific world of academic neurosurgery had profoundly called into question how such things could exist....In fact, I would have loved to have enjoyed some of it myself. The older I got, however, the less likely that seemed. Like an ocean wearing away a beach, over the years my scientific worldview gently but steadily undermined my ability to believe in something larger. Science seemed to be providing a steady onslaught of evidence that pushed our significance in the universe ever closer to zero. Belief would have been nice. But science is not concerned with what would be nice. It’s concerned with what is.” (Eben Alexander III M.D., *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife*, 34-35 (Kindle Edition); New York, NY; Simon & Schuster)

Like many in our world, the good doctor had bought into the lie of materialism.

However, something changed his “mind.”

“On November 10, 2008, however, at age fifty-four, my luck seemed to run out. I was struck by a rare illness and thrown into a coma for seven days. During that time, my entire neocortex—the outer surface of the brain, the part that makes us human—was shut down. Inoperative. In essence, absent. When your brain is absent, you are absent, too. As a neurosurgeon, I’d heard many stories over the years of people who had strange experiences, usually after suffering cardiac arrest: stories of traveling to mysterious, wonderful landscapes; of talking to dead relatives—even of meeting God Himself. Wonderful stuff, no question. But all of it, in my opinion, was pure fantasy. What caused the otherworldly types of experiences that such people so often report? I didn’t claim to know, but I did know that they were brain-based. All of consciousness is. If you don’t have a working brain, you can’t be conscious. This is because the brain is the machine that produces consciousness in the first place. When the machine breaks down, consciousness stops. As vastly complicated and mysterious as the actual mechanics of brain processes are, in essence the matter is as simple as that. Pull the plug and the TV goes dead. The show is over, no matter how much you might have been enjoying it. Or so I would have told you before my own brain crashed. During my coma my brain wasn’t working improperly—it wasn’t working at all. I now believe that this might have been what was

responsible for the depth and intensity of the near-death experience (NDE) that I myself underwent during it. Many of the NDEs reported happen when a person's heart has shut down for a while. In those cases, the neocortex is temporarily inactivated, but generally not too damaged, provided that the flow of oxygenated blood is restored through cardiopulmonary resuscitation or reactivation of cardiac function within four minutes or so. But in my case, the neocortex was out of the picture. I was encountering the reality of a world of consciousness that existed completely free of the limitations of my physical brain. Mine was in some ways a perfect storm of near-death experiences. As a practicing neurosurgeon with decades of research and hands-on work in the operating room behind me, I was in a better-than-average position to judge not only the reality but also the implications of what happened to me. Those implications are tremendous beyond description. My experience showed me that the death of the body and the brain are not the end of consciousness, that human experience continues beyond the grave. More important, it continues under the gaze of a God who loves and cares about each one of us and about where the universe itself and all the beings within it are ultimately going.” (Eben Alexander III M.D., *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife*, 8-9 (Kindle Edition); New York, NY; Simon & Schuster)

Alexander is in a unique position to evaluate his own experience. When he applied his vast scientific knowledge and considerations, it led him to the amazing conclusion: materialism is false.

There IS a reality which exists beyond the material realm (just as the Bible teaches).

Other scientists through the years have come to the same conclusion regarding the subject.

For example:

“There is far more to what Eccles has called *The Wonder of Being Human: Our Brain & Our Mind* than neural activity in the brain. During most of the last century, materialism was the dominant belief among physical scientists and even neurologists, a prejudice clearly expressed by Lord Adrian: “The final aim of brain research must be to bring behavior within the framework of

the physical sciences.” 28 It is not honest science to insist that one’s experiments reach a predetermined result. Adrian was echoing the Manifesto already issued by Carl Ludwig, Emil du-Bois-Reymond, and Hermann von Helmholtz: “All the activities of living material, including consciousness, are ultimately to be explained in terms of physics and chemistry.” 29 Why this prejudiced and unscientific demand? Materialism is the atheist’s last fortress. If that must finally be surrendered, the materialist’s final hope is gone. That surrender to truth and reality could precipitate a burst of discovery and advancement. True science has far too long been hog-tied by the determination not to allow that “Divine Foot in the door.” 30 Atheism and materialism go hand-in-hand, supporting one another in their denial of God. Increasingly, however, toward the end of the last century, even leading physical scientists such as physicists, chemists, physiologists—and especially neurologists—began to see that materialism did not explain the data that was coming in. Inescapably, it all pointed to a nonphysical source of thought. Mind had to be distinct from brain. Chemical and electrical reactions in the brain could not explain the whole person. Eccles pointedly observed, “It is not at all clear how ‘natural selection’ has somehow selected for Bach’s ‘Partitas’ . . . or for a system of justice that will let a thousand guilty men go free lest one innocent man be constrained of his liberties.” After extensive interviews in Europe and America, philosophy-of-science professor John Gliedman wrote: Several leading theorists have arrived at the same startling conclusions: their work suggests a hidden spiritual world, within all of us. . . . From Berkeley to Paris and from London to Princeton, prominent scientists from fields as diverse as neurophysiology and quantum physics are coming out of the closet and admitting they believe in the possibility, at least, of such unscientific entities as the immortal human spirit and divine creation. 31 Materialistic science has nothing to say about the mind (except to deny its existence), which famed neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield described as “outside [and] independent of the brain.” 32 Penfield, during his lifetime known as “the greatest living Canadian,” taught for years at Montreal’s McGill University and the Royal Victoria hospital. Obviously, anything governing human behavior that is outside and independent of the brain must be nonphysical—a scientific conclusion confirmed by many experiments that rankles materialists. Sir John Eccles confirms, with his own research, Penfield’s conclusions. He describes the brain as a machine that a ghost can operate, by which he ordinarily means the human spirit.” (Dave Hunt,

Cosmos, Creator and Human Destiny: Answering Darwin, Dawkins, and the New Atheists, 4345-4373 (Kindle Edition); Bend, Oregon; The Berean Call)

Modern science confirms the teachings of the Bible.

Yet we must remember that the mysteries of life, death, and beyond are best explained by the One Who created all and is Master of all: Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:18-I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

Friends, you DO have an immortal soul-and your actions in this world will determine the fate of your soul.

Wouldn't it be wise to seek God with all your heart today (Jeremiah 29:13)?

The churches of Christ stand ready to assist you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

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