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Week 41: Mission: Rescue Life

James & Betty Robison

Lee Strobel #2

Studio discussion:

JAMES: Well, I'm excited we're together. I'm James Robison, my wife Betty, both of us welcome you to *Life Today*. I'm excited because Lee Strobel, a great writer, has written many million selling books, he was an atheist and he went out to prove and justify his atheism but he decided he had to investigate Jesus, and Jesus investigated him, and transformed him, and he wrote *Seeing the Supernatural*. We talked about it, and you'll want to get this book.

Today, we're going to talk about the supernatural that awaits us. And Lee, I glanced down here at some of the titles: Deathbed Visions, Extraordinary Near-death Experiences, What Can We Know about Heaven? I'm going to ask you, would you tell us just a little bit that you've learned that we can know about heaven? But then he's going to talk about several other of the supernatural things that await us. And, I promise you, he's going to bless you. You might want to call some friends and say, Turn the television on to *Life Today* right now, because you're going to get life today. Lee, can you touch on that?

LEE: We get a glimpse of heaven through some of these amazing supernatural experiences that are well-documented. In other words, this isn't just something that's coming from somebody's imagination. So I'll give you a couple examples that blew my mind when I investigated them. First ones are near-death experiences. I was skeptical about this. I thought, this sounds new-age. A near-death experience of someone who's clinically dead, generally, no heartbeat, no brain waves, no respiration, and yet, they continue to live on. Their spirit separates from their body at the time of death, and sees things and hears things that would have been impossible for them to see or hear if they hadn't had an authentic out-of-body experience.

This confirms what the Bible teaches because Jesus said, to the person being crucified with him on the cross, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." And the Bible says, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." So what happens when we die, when we physically die in this world our soul, our spirit separates from our body. And if we're a follower of Jesus, we're in the presence of God in a sort of temporary heaven until the consummation of history when Jesus returns, when our spirit returns to our now resurrected body, and then we go through final judgment, and we spend eternity in a very real and very physical heaven or hell, if you're not a follower of Jesus.

So, this is confirmation that indeed we do have a soul and it does continue to live on. I found 900 scholarly articles published in peer-reviewed medical and scientific journals into this phenomenon of near-death experiences. Here's why I know, because I'm trained in journalism and law, I'm looking for evidence and so forth. How do I know that this is authentic? We have multiple, numerous, hundreds of cases where it would be impossible for the separated body, the soul, to see and hear what they saw or heard if this wasn't an out-of-body experience.

I'll give you an example. There was a woman who was named Mary. She was dying. She's in London, England, Memorial Hospital. She's bleeding to death. They can't control it. She's declared dead. But, she said later, "I was conscious the whole time. My spirit separated from my body." And she said, "I'm hovering near the ceiling of the room, watching as the paramedics are trying to resuscitate my body." And then, ultimately, they did resuscitate her body, they brought her back. Her spirit returned to her body. And here's the corroboration. She said, "By the way, there's a ceiling fan here in the hospital room. On the top of one of the blades, you couldn't see it from the room, on the top of one of the blades, she saw it from her perspective, looking down. She said, There's a red sticker, which she described in great detail. There's no way she could have known this. So they got a ladder. They went up, they looked on the top of the blade, and sure enough, there's a red sticker just as she described it.

That's just one of hundreds of examples of cases where people see or hear things that would have been impossible for them to see or hear. So this is confirmation. The Bible is telling us the

truth. We do have a spirit, and we do have a soul. In fact, we are a soul who has a body, and when we die our soul continues to live on.

Fascinating case, researched by medical researchers, 21 blind people, most of them blind since birth, and yet, during their near-death experience, they could see, many of them for the first time. So, for example, was a woman named Vicky Umapeg, 26 years old, blind virtually since birth. She's a passenger in a car, she gets in a car wreck and she's killed in the car accident. But she said, "I was conscious the whole time. And I could see! I'm watching the paramedics working on my body, trying to resuscitate me. I see trees, I see birds, I see plants, I see the world for the first time. I see people." And then they finally revived her body. Her spirit returned and she was blind again. One medical -- this is medically impossible, one medical researcher said. And yet, we have 21 cases like this in the medical research area.

Now, here's the key. John Burke, who's a friend of mine. He was a pastor in Austin, Texas. He has researched 1500 of these cases. John documents, and I interview him for my book so I have the documentation. If you look at not how people interpret the out-of-body experience, because people with different backgrounds interpret it differently -- set that aside. Just look at what actually takes place during a near-death experience. It is 100% consistent with the teachings of the Bible.

So here we have a category of evidence for the supernatural that tells -- at a minimum, at a minimum, this tells us the Bible is right. When we die, our spirit, our soul continues to live on. That's pretty good news, right?

But then there's another category that's similar, and people don't talk about this as much but to me it's just as fascinating, deathbed visions. This is a vision that someone has just before they die and they see the heavens open, and they see the realm to come. And it's Biblical. Acts, chapter seven, Stephen described as being full of the Holy Spirit. He's about to be stoned to death. He looks up, he sees the heavens open up, and he sees the Father and the Son together. So there's biblical precedent for this.

But there have been literally tens of thousands of cases of people who are on their deathbed. They get a glimpse of what's to come. They studied 3000 of them to try to determine, is this just something in their imagination? And they say 3000 cases, and they said, This is not, wishful thinking. It's not a hallucination. It's not something conjured up from their, you know, thinking and so forth. Something is going on. Here's the corroboration. Sometimes people will see things in the realm to come that they didn't know were there.

So I give you an example. A well-documented case, Doris, woman dying. She's on her deathbed. She sees the heavens open up. She sees angelic beings. She sees her father, who had died several years earlier, almost welcoming her to the realm to come. And then she gets this puzzled look on her face. She says, Wait a minute. Why is Vida with my father? What's Vida doing there? That makes no sense. What? Why would Vida be there? And then she died. Vida was her sister. Her sister had died two weeks earlier but no one had told Doris because Doris was ill. They didn't want the shock to kill her. So they withheld the news that her sister Vida had died. And yet, on her deathbed, she sees Vida in the realm to come. That's corroboration. That tells me –

And can I tell you something? I'm doing the research for this book. I get all excited when I do this. I'm telling my wife, I said, Honey! And I told her that story. She said, “Lee, don't you remember what happened with my dad?” I forgot; 20 years ago, her father, who I led to the Lord in his last conversation before he died. But he's on his deathbed in hospice, and she comes to visit him and he's got this -- he's agitated. He says, “Where's Marge?” “What do you mean?” “Marge was just here telling me about heaven. She was just here. I'm going to heaven. Where's Marge?” “Dad, Marge died.” That was his sister. She died two days ago. We just haven't told you yet. “No, no, no! She was here. She was just telling me about heaven.” He had a pre-death vision seeing his now deceased sister, who he didn't know had died, telling him about heaven.

So this is corroboration. This tells me something. And by the way, talk to any hospice nurse. They'll tell you. They'll tell you about how people reach up at the last moment, as if to be -- And what's interesting in the Bible, in Luke, chapter 16, where Jesus is telling the story about Lazarus, a beggar who had died, and in verse 22, he says angels carried Lazarus to his place of

bliss in the presence of God. So often, dying people see angels coming for them. And here's the corroboration.

Children who are dying see angels coming for them in a way you would not expect. Because if you ask, what would a five-year-old child, six-year-old child, what would their image of an angel be? Well, big wings and probably feathers. That's a caricature, but that's what a kid would see. That's not what they see. There's a well-documented case that I researched where this little girl was dying and says, "Mommy, mommy! They're coming for me. Do you see them?" "What are you talking about?" "The angels! They're in this room. They're so beautiful! Listen to their singing. Oh, I'm going with them. This is wonderful." And her mother didn't want to disappoint her, so she said, "Oh! Oh, I see the angels. Look at their big wings!" And the little girl said, "Oh, mommy, they don't have wings." And she went on to describe them in great detail. The Bible doesn't say that all angels have wings. And she described them in great detail. You would think if this is just something coming from her imagination, she would see angels like a caricature as a kid would with big wings and feathers or whatever. That's not what they see.

So this is a fascinating category, I think, that tells us there is a supernatural realm. There is a heaven. In fact, one of my friends, who was Billy Graham's best friend, Chuck Templeton, Charles Templeton, who lost his faith at a liberal seminary, became a skeptic and atheist in Canada. I interviewed him for my book, *The Case for Faith*, and I answered all his tough questions about faith. But anyway, most people don't know, he came back to faith before he died, came back to Jesus. And on his deathbed, he called out to his wife, "Madeleine!" "What, honey?" "Do you see them? They're here for me." "What are you talking about, Chuck?" "The angels, they're in this room. Look at their eyes! Their eyes are so beautiful. I'm going with them. I'm going home. I'm going to heaven." So Chuck Templeton saw these angels coming for him, this former skeptic, former atheist.

So I just get excited when you talk about what do we know about heaven? We know a lot from Scripture about heaven. I don't get my theology about heaven from near-death experiences or deathbed visions, but they are confirmatory that indeed the Bible is telling us the truth. There is a realm beyond what we can see and touch and put in a test tube.

JAMES: You know, I just want you to know the Father, and as one of his family, you'll be in heaven forever with him, all of his family, with me and Betty, and with Lee, and so many that you just heard about. Johnny Cash was a really good friend of mine. He wanted to be my singer. His mother wanted him to be my singer. I told him, "No, you can't be my singer. I want you to go to Folsom Prison. I want you to go everywhere you can go. I want you to go to Las Vegas. I want you to do your thing. Point them to Jesus." He did.

But one of the most powerful things in Johnny's life was the memory of when his brother died. And he died as a teenager. He was cut through the sternum in a shop class with a circle saw, and he was dying. They couldn't give him water, but Johnny said, You know, James, and his mom was standing right there, "We watched Jack, and he just looked up in the corner and his face just shone like a light and said, 'Mom, don't you see them? Don't you see them? Do you see them, mom? Johnny, do you see them?' "See what?" "The angels -- can't you see them? Can't you see them?" Johnny said nothing ever made such an impact on me than seeing the brother I loved so much, and who loved me so much knowing that he left seeing the angels, and in heaven.

LEE: I did not know that story. That is a fascinating and another great example.

JAMES: It just really is. We've known so many people.

BETTY: Well, your best friend, Pete Claytor.

JAMES: My best friend that became like a father to me, I didn't have a father, he was just a Baptist deacon that picked me up at the airport in Lubbock when I went to First Baptist out there, and I was 22 or 23 years old. He just kind of just moved in with me, and became like a brother and like a father. When he was dying, and he died in his 90s, I think he was 90, just a little over 90. And he said, "See them, momma? See them?" They had a phone camera going. "See them? See them?" Boy, you could tell he could see them. Do you know why we're talking about this? And I know why you're writing about it, it's not trying to prove a point. It's sharing

beautiful testimonies of the reality of heaven, the reality of spiritual beings, and the spiritual kingdom, and, yes, demonic power and reality, angelic power, and just God's power and everything that he says in his Word. And Lee's shared it so beautifully. We share this because we want you to know the Father -- the Father. He wants you to be in his family. And I'm going to spend the rest of my life, Lee, trying to get his family to look like him.

Betty, I have led a lot of highly visible preachers that didn't like each other, preached against each other, I have been able to lead them to sit together like the family of the Father. And Lee, I've watched them not only love the Father more, but begin to love one another, even though they may have had a disagreement, serious disagreements.

LEE: That's Jesus' prayer that we would love one another.

JAMES: Absolutely. And even when we disagree, you don't have to wish death on someone, speak death on them, speak curses on them, try to destroy them -- Don't do that! Don't try to amputate them from the body of Christ. Do spiritual surgery on them. Talk to them about why you see what you see the way you see it. Let them tell you what they see, and you may see it differently. But don't you believe, Lee, we can disagree. One of us can be terribly wrong, but don't you think that if Jesus could keep talking to those disciples that could make a mess out of a miracle, don't you think it's amazing that he gave us that grace that we could do that for one another? But we just seem reluctant to do it.

LEE: We do. And you know, I was ordained in an interdenominational church, which means we held tight to the gospel and agreed to disagree on certain areas of Scripture that have different interpretations. So some people interpret it differently, and that's okay as long as we hold tight to the gospel. We can have a little different opinion about some of the peripheral matters of faith, but we hold tight to that gospel because that is where hope is. In my book, I talk about cases where people have had near-death experiences, atheists who have horrific experiences. Howard Storm, an atheist professor at a major secular university, tenured professor, dies in a hospital in England. His spirit separates but he ends up being mauled by demons. He said no horror film can ever capture the cruelty they inflicted on me. It was

unbelievable. And he called out to Jesus in the midst of that, and God rescued him. When he was revived and His spirit returned to his body, he not only renounced his atheism, he not only quit his tenured position at the university, he not only became a Christian, he went to seminary, and today, he's a pastor of a little church in the middle of nowhere in Kentucky, teaching people about Jesus Christ. That's radical transformation.

But we've got to be honest and say there is a heaven. There's also a hell, and so let's make sure that we receive this free gift of God's grace so that we can spend eternity together.

JAMES: Well, I think that's why we're here. We want you to know the life of God, the love of God. And you know what? We've encouraged viewers to help us share the love of God with the overlooked, to put his arms around those who thought no one would ever notice. It's only the body of Christ, so only the family of God that can put his arms around the world that desperately needs life.

Would you right now consider helping us rescue those who are trafficked right now sexually, who need to be set free? Please listen to what I share and what others share and what you see literally on the mission field.

Father, please, bless this time as our viewers consider putting your arms around the overlooked.

Transition roll-in: [Hart to Heart]

ANNOUNCER: *Child sex trafficking is a devastating crime that affects millions of children worldwide, stealing their innocence and subjecting them to unimaginable pain.*

CAROL: A little missionary came to our church from Southeast Asia, and she said that you can get a little boy and a little girl menu on the street corner. And you can rent them out for the night for sex, for whatever you want to do with them.

Do you know a child who's trafficked at age 12, before they're even old enough to get their driver's license, they've been raped at least 5000 times?

ANNOUNCER: *Life Outreach International is partnering with missionaries around the world like Carol Hart and her husband, Michael. They have dedicated their lives to rescuing children from the evils of sex trafficking. Working in cooperation with local authorities, their teams participate in raids to help free victims of sex trafficking. Rescuing children is only the beginning. What comes next changes lives forever.*

CAROL: The Child Rescue Center that Life Outreach built, all the kids start there first. Right after their rescue, they go to the LIFE center there. If they don't have a safe place to go home, then the child will move to the long-term housing that LIFE Outreach built. They'll grow there; they don't age out. When they're ready for independent living and they're safe, they can go out on their own, then we will help them transition.

ANNOUNCER: *Literally, hundreds of precious children have been rescued and restored because of the dedication of mission partners like Carol and Michael Hart. But the work is not finished.*

CAROL: I'm not sure you know what it means, what you've done in the lives of children. Every day, we find ourselves in the throne room of God praying for those kids who are waiting for rescue. Please, let's not grow weary in doing good. There's still so much work to be done. Let's do it together.

Studio appeal:

JAMES: You know that lady, Carol and her husband have helped us rescue thousands of children and people who were trapped. It's been the most amazing thing. The Destiny House, perhaps one of the largest outreaches to the trafficked in the world. And they didn't build it. We found them, sent from Hollywood by God to rescue the trafficked. They sold everything they rented houses. We found them. They had watched us and loved us on television. Said we were

part of them being inspired to go to the mission field. And they left Hollywood. There we started helping them rent property. Then we helped them buy property and helped them build Destiny House, and many other places.

Right now in Asia, we have got a building that can house 50 girls in wonderful quarters if we can just complete it. We needed \$1.5 million. We got half of it when we first asked for it. Now we need to complete it. We have so many right now that are just pleading for a place to go. And we have so many mission workers saying, "Please, James, ask your viewers, ask the people that love you and what you do and what we all do to please help us."

Would you right now, when Rescue Life, it takes \$128 to rescue one person. That's the average cost. \$1,280, you can rescue ten people. There's a level at which you can participate. We're asking every one of you watching to ask God right now, what do you want me to do, and what will you enable me to do? And then you go get your checkbook, get your bank card, call that number, go online, and make the greatest gift possible, and know that you're giving the absolute greatest gift, you're giving the gift of life. Not only life now and freedom, but life eternal through Jesus Christ.

Father, help everyone watching to simply do what they can to help us put your arms around the least of these and the overlooked; in Jesus' name.

Would you please do it right now? Just do what God leads you to do. He'll enable you to do it. And if you can help us complete that beautiful center, we need another half-million-dollar miracle. Father, grant that through your faithful friends of LIFE; in Jesus' name.

Thank you so much for responding to God.

RL Cause Spot – 2025 Fall

ANNOUNCER: *Innocent children, longing to be loved and cared for, are being abducted and sold into the evil industry of human trafficking. Through Mission: Rescue Life, your gift today*

of only \$128 will help reach, rescue, or restore a child and change their destiny forever. Gifts of \$64 or \$32 will be combined with support from others to help rescue one more child from the shame and pain of sexual slavery.

Currently, our LIFE rescue centers in Southeast Asia are at maximum capacity. More space is urgently needed, and we must complete and renovate a new rescue home immediately. Please consider a very special extra gift as we urgently need \$1.25 million above our normal budget to complete and renovate this place of hope.

With a gift of any amount, we'll send you Power, Provision and Peace: Bringing together the life-changing truths of Acts, Romans, and First and Second Corinthians in the Passion Translation. These books come alive with fresh revelation and timeless power. With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive the beautiful and soft "Perfect Peace Blanket," bearing the words of Isaiah 26:3 as a meaningful reminder that those who trust in the Lord are never alone. Finally, please consider a gift of \$1,280, which will help save ten children, and you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Lion of Judah."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

Studio goodbye:

JAMES: Let me just say thank you to all of you who helped us reach out and put God's arms around those trafficked girls and helped us get that incredible building to give a girl a room and a home she's never had. We really do need some big-time help.

Father, Betty and I are in agreement right now. Just give us some supernatural help; in Jesus' name.

Lee, you're a tremendous blessing. And, you will enjoy this book. You help us put God's arms around those who are trafficked, the overlooked, and if you want the book, you just ask for it. We'll send it to you.

Lee is going to be with us in another program and you're going to enjoy it. You always enjoy our times together. Lee, God bless you. Thank you. Thank you for being so great to us and to so many.

Thank you for being a blessing to so many, the overlooked, the least of these. Thank you.