



A Glimpse Of Paradise

By: Jerry M. Gilbert, Sr.

In II Corinthians 12, Paul tells of a vision of Paradise he experienced some 14 years earlier. He did not know whether he was in or out of his body. This incident most likely happened when he had been stoned at Lystra (Acts 14:19-20). He was dragged outside the city and left for dead. While the disciples stood around him, he rose up, walked back into the city and departed the next day with Barnabas. This shows the power of God to protect from injury and/or heal your injuries.

I risk being branded as a religious nut or fool by my friends for relating the following incident that happened to me. I am certainly not trying to class myself with Paul, nor to bring any vain glory or attention to myself. I will relate exactly what happened and what I saw, so God can be exalted and He can receive honor and glory. He is still alive, on the throne, in complete charge of everything and does hear and answer prayers. Miracles do still happen today!

On December 17, 1997, at about 11:00 a.m., I was talking to my neighbor, Mr, Huff. We were upstairs walking out on my back deck, which is 10 feet 3 inches above a concrete patio. We were in the process of building our house and the deck had no rails and had a large open hole where the fireplace chimney would come through the deck. I made a backward misstep, fell through that opening and landed flat of my back on the concrete patio. From where my head was, when I was standing up, to where my head hit the concrete below is over 16 feet.

Our plumber, Harry, said, "You hit and bounced. When your head hit the concrete, it sounded like a watermelon."

My wife (which was around the house from where I fell) said, "It sounded like someone had dropped a bundle of shingles from the roof. You were not breathing, your eyes were set and staring and your lips looked like they were turned inside out."

Harry came down from upstairs and said, "I finally found a pulse, but it was weak and getting weaker." He rushed around the house to his plumbing truck and called 911 for an ambulance. He told them what had happened and gave them directions. When he returned, I still had not breathed since the fall. He joined the others in the prayer meeting. The four witnesses estimated that the time of not breathing was 5 to 15 minutes.

I do not remember anything about the fall, except knowing I had made a backward misstep and was going to fall. Immediately, I was flying through the air and coming in for a feet first landing. I was standing in a meadow of clover. It was the most beautiful sight I have ever seen. I looked down at my feet. I was barefooted and the clover was pressed down under them, but as I looked around there was no trail leading to where I was standing. To my front and a little to the left, the meadow slanted down into a

valley. In front and to my right, it rose gently to some rolling hills a few hundred yards away.

The clover was about six inches high and all of it was exactly the same even height. It looked like a carpet. There were no open spots, no high spots, or any places where it was shorter than other places. Into the valley to my left and over the hills in front and to my right, it maintained the same smooth evenness, like a carpet. It looked like crimson clover that had headed, but instead of being crimson, the heads were a very light blue in color, like a perfect field of blue-bonnets.

I was aware of a young lady standing to my right and a few feet behind me. She was wearing a long white dress with light blue (sheer curtain-like) material over her head and shoulders. The sheer head scarf material flowed a little in front, as though a slight breeze was blowing. She looked like my niece, Karen, who is nine days younger than our daughter, Angela. They were born in January, 1962. They looked very much alike, both having long dark hair and dark brown eyes. Angela, however, had a birth defect, (Myelomeningocele: This is the most severe form of spina bifida, in which a portion of the spinal cord itself protrudes through the back). After several operations and a total of 3 1/2 years in hospitals, she died in July of 1967, at the age of 5 1/2 years.

I stood with my mouth open looking around. I was about to turn to find out who the young lady was, that was standing watching me, when I heard my wife calling me from the other direction. As I turned toward her, I regained consciousness.

The first thing I saw when I opened my eyes was my wife. We were married June 6, 1959. She has been my heartbeat since we met at her church in 1955. She is now and has always been my best friend since we first met. She was over me fervently praying. Our plumber, his assistant and our neighbor had joined in the prayer-meeting.

My wife told me, you smiled when you woke up and told me that you were dreaming.

She said, "Don't move. We have an ambulance on the way."

I said, "cancel it, I am OK,"

"But, You fell!"

"I know, I fell from up there," I said motioning to the hole in the deck.

I was not gasping for breath, I simply stood up, retrieved my shoes which had both, seemingly blown off, and were several feet in front of where I had been lying flat on my back. My glasses had bounced off a door, that was several feet behind where I landed in the other direction. After picking up my glasses, I walked into the house and sat down.

Our plumber came in a few minutes later and said, "You need to get to the emergency room fast. At least have yourself checked over. You had a nasty fall. A head injury is nothing to fool around with. If you won't go for yourself, go for me. I can't take much more," he said while clutching his chest.

I had my wife drive me to the emergency room at General Hospital. As I was waiting for x-rays, my children, Carmen and Mark, came into the emergency room. We are a very close family, and they were visibly shaken. The emergency waiting room soon filled with my friends, our pastor and relatives, who were all praying for me.

I had three different sets of x-rays and a Cat Scan. There was no head injury. No bruises on my body. No knots on my head. The incident happened three weeks ago, (at the time of this writing in 1997), and I still have not had a headache, I give all the credit to God for healing and protecting me from, what, very easily could have been, a fatal fall.

My emergency room doctor stated, "I have seen many people really messed up from just a little fall, like out of a chair. We have to reconstruct their faces. Some of them don't make it, and you fell from over 10 feet and hit your head on concrete?" He had asked, while shaking his head with a puzzled expression.

I said, "I didn't know you dreamed when you were knocked out like that."
He asked, "what did you dream?"
I told him about the beautiful blue clover, the three hills in the distance, the valley, the young lady.

He said, "that was not a dream, that was one of those near death, or out of body experiences that we just don't understand." He said he could not understand why I was not all broken up, having no head or spinal injuries, or otherwise badly hurt. He acknowledged, "surely God must have intervened for you."

A few months later, I had an MRI of my head. My Neurologist called me and said, "I could not find a thing!"

I said, "I have been told that before, maybe there is nothing up there!" We both had a good laugh. Then he said, "there is no evidence of you having any injury. No scar tissue. Nothing. That is amazing, you were dead! "

I do have two broken ribs as a reminder, but it could have been so much worse. To God be the glory, the honor, and praise for all of his mighty works, and thanksgivings for my protection.