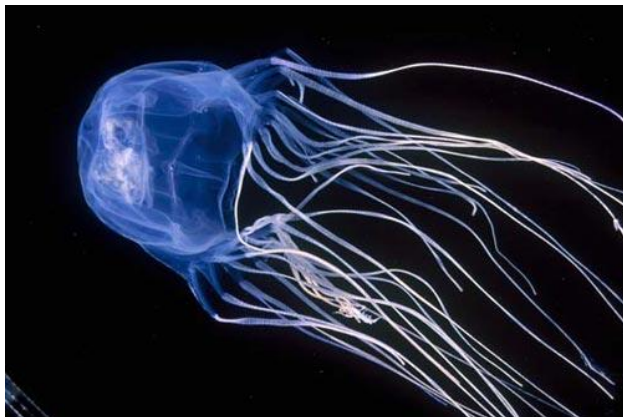


How it Happened

One night while diving for lobster on the small Island of Mauritius I was stung on my forearm by five box jellyfish. This particular type of jellyfish is among the most venomous creatures in the world. Leaving New Zealand in 1980 at the age of 24, I had been travelling around the world for 2 years. In April 1982, at the age of 26, I was facing death.

By the time an ambulance arrived my body was totally paralyzed and necrosis had begun to set into my bone marrow. On route to the hospital I began to see my life flash before me. At this point of my life I was an atheist, but I knew I was nearly dead. I didn't know if there was life after death or whether there was just nothing.

As I lay there dying, I saw my mother in a vision praying for me, encouraging me to cry out to God from my heart and He would hear me and forgive me (my mother was the only Christian in our family.) I didn't know what to pray and cried out that if God was real, could He help me to pray. Immediately God showed me the Lord's Prayer, and for the first time in my life I prayed from my heart and gave my life to the Lord.



Death & Hell

The doctors tried to save my life by injecting anti-toxins and dextrose into my body, but seemingly to no avail. Within a few minutes I seemed to slip away. Apparently life ceased from my body for a period of approximately 15-20 minutes.

From the darkness I began to hear men's voices screaming at me telling me to "shut up" - "that I deserved to be here" - "that I was in Hell". As I stood there a radiant beam of light shone through the darkness and immediately began to lift me upward. I found myself being translated up into an incredibly brilliant beam of pure white light; it seemed to be emanating from a circular opening far above me.

The Source of Light

I entered this opening to find myself inside a long narrow passageway or tunnel. At the far end of the tunnel I could see the source of the light. It was so radiant that it looked to be the centre of the universe. This light seemed to draw me towards it at an incredible speed. I wasn't walking but was being translated along this tunnel. I watched as a wave of light broke off the source and moved up the tunnel towards me. As it passed through me I could feel a wave of warmth and comfort flood my soul. It was incredible. This light wasn't just physical, but was giving off a living emotion.

As I stood there I wondered to myself if this was just an energy source in the universe or if perhaps there could be someone standing in the midst of this light! A voice immediately responded to my thought and asked me "Ian, do you wish to return?" Return, I thought! Where am I? As I looked over my shoulder I could see the tunnel going back into darkness. I

responded, "If I am out of my physical body I wish to return." He knows what I am thinking before I even speak, only God could do that.

Words appeared in front of me, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). The light seemed to absorb me into it. The centre seemed to be very bright. I could feel a healing presence coming off this light that was healing my broken heart. It was touching me deep inside my heart of hearts where no one gets to see.

Suddenly it opened up in the centre and standing in front of me was the most awesome sight. I could see a man standing in front of me, but He was not like anyone I'd ever seen before in my life. His garments were shimmering white in colour; garments of light. I could see His bare feet and His hands were outstretched towards me as if to welcome me. I knew I was looking upon God.

You couldn't make out the form of His face as the light was so bright—such purity, such holiness, such beauty. I asked God if I could step closer. I felt I could. Moving closer waves of more love began to flow towards me, and I felt very safe. Standing, now feet away, from the Lord I tried to see His face, but I didn't know that no man can see the face of God and live. And so, as I moved my face into the radiance that surrounded His face, He moved, and all His glory moved with Him.

Directly behind Him it opened out into a brand-new world—green pastures, a crystal clear stream, rolling green hills to my right, mountains in the distance, blue skies above, to my left fields interspersed with trees and flowers. As I looked at the grass in front of me I could see the same light that was with God was radiating throughout this entire creation. In my heart I knew I belonged here and that God had created me to live here. I knew I was home.



Called to Return

I was just about to enter in and explore, when Jesus stepped back in front of me, and asked me this question. "Now that you have seen, do you wish to step in or do you wish to return?" I thought, "I don't want to return. I wish to step in."

I looked back to say, "Goodbye, cruel world", and standing behind me in a vision in front of the tunnel was my mother. As soon as I saw her I knew that there was one person in my life that had shown me love, and that was my mother, and that she had prayed for me every day and tried to show me that this was the way.

In my mind I thought, "If I am dead and I did choose to step into Heaven, what would my mother think? Would she know I made it or would she think I went to Hell—because she knew I had no faith? I realised that it could break her heart and that she would have no reason to believe that God had heard my prayer in the ambulance and forgiven my sins. I thought, "How can I do that to my Mum, it would be so selfish", so I decided to return.

Looking back towards the tunnel again I now could see a vision of all my family, and thousands and thousands of other people. I asked God who all these people were, and He told me that if I didn't return then many of these people would not get a chance to hear about Him. I told God that I didn't know most of them and I didn't love them, but that I loved my mother and wished to return for her. God spoke to me and told me that He loved those people and wanted them all to come to know Him.

I asked God how could I possibly return back down the tunnel and back into my hospital bed. He spoke and said, "Son, tilt your head, now feel the liquid drain from your eye. Now open your eye and see." And I was immediately back in my physical body.

Over the years some people have questioned my experience, but I personally believe I died, I was taken out of my body, and I had what is termed a "life after death experience". I stood before the risen Lord Jesus Christ in His glory (Revelation 1:13-18).

I am not trying to tell you what to believe. But one thing I do know, is that after following Jesus since 1982, I can't wait to see Jesus again in His glorified form and step through into the new heavens & new earth. Please pray:

"Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner. Save me and set me free."

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EXPERIENCING LIFE AFTER DEATH



The Ian McCormack Story