



From the Pen of the Bishop.....



During Fr. Pete's bible study class last Tuesday night the subject of the Kingdom of God and heaven was being discussed from the reading in Isaiah. After some remarks I felt it necessary to comment on the fallacy of the many books regarding people who seemingly have gone to heaven and returned to tell of their experiences. Since then I feel compelled to expand on that to the whole perish for the spiritual good of all.

The Protestant Evangelical community has consumed many after-life books written by confused, liberal, greedy authors and the "Christian Publishing Houses" have pumped them out. Just to name a few,

90 Minutes in Heaven 23 Minutes in Hell Flight to Heaven
Heaven is for Real To Heaven and back Nine Days in heaven
My Journey to Heaven Proof of Heaven Forty Days in heaven
The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven Falling into Heaven
My Astonishing Trip to Heaven and Back

Tens of millions of these book have been sold and they are full of hogwash! Why do I say that? These books are full of non-biblical nonsense, and gullible Christians are unaware of what the Holy Scripture has to say to them about the existence of God, the person of Jesus Christ, Heaven and Hell.

The Bible is very clear on this subject. And I can say very bluntly and boldly based on scripture there is not one truth in any of these books listed above. Listen to the words of Jesus himself, "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man." John 3:13 In other words round trips to heaven don't happen.

We see it again in Luke 16:29-31, where Jesus is telling the story of Lazarus and the rich man where there was a great gulf between Paradise and Hades. The rich man asked for a messenger from the dead be sent to warn his brothers that heaven was real and not to come to the place he was in. Jesus response was, if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.

Isaiah and St. John had visions of heaven, glimpses of heaven but they did not take trips into heaven like these current writers claim. St. Paul was given a vision as he says being caught up into the third heaven, but was forbidden to express inexpressible things, 2 Corinthians 12: 1-10. In fact God sent a "messenger of Satan" to torment him from becoming conceited because of these great revelations. Yet, St. Paul goes on to write most of the rest of the New Testament as the Holy Spirit inspired him which produced most of our basic our theology as he also became the Apostle to the Gentiles establishing the Church. Then people think these authors and publishers can tell us about heaven, given me a break.

When Isaiah approached God in his vision he fell on his face and Isa. 6:5 gives us his reaction,

Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

One book records Colton Burpo, age four who thought he went to heaven and sat on Jesus' lap petting his colored horse while meeting the Holy Spirit who was blue. He didn't seem to fall on his face before the holiness of God, nor was he caught in reverent fear nor was he aware of his sinfulness. He just said God was "really, really big." Quite the opposite of Isaiah's reaction. When you read the scripture you notice that in every encounter with just the angels, men always responded in holy fear.

There are some possible explanations behind the authors writings of these nonbiblical books.

1. They are lying
2. They had some hallucinations due to drugs, surgery and anesthesia
3. Demonic vision, Satan masquerades as an angel of light, 2Cor.

11:14-15

Here is just one example. In 2004 six year old Alex Malarkey was involved in a bad car accident that left him paralyzed for life. Alex later coauthored the book *The Boy who Came Back from Heaven*. But then in 2015 he wrote an open letter to the Christian Book Retailers which I quote in part.

An Open Letter to Lifeway and other Sellers-Buyers

by the Boy Who Did Not Come Back From Heaven

Please forgive the brevity, but because of my limitations I have to keep it short. I did not die. I did not go to Heaven. I said I went to heaven because I thought it would get me attention. When I made the claims that I did, I had never read the Bible. People have profited from lies, and continue to do so. They should read the Bible, which is enough. The Bible is the only source of truth. Anything written by man cannot be infallible.

In Christ

Alex Malarkey

The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven, Recants Story, Rebukes Retailers. Pulpit &Pen, Jan 13, 2015

As your Bishop I express these thoughts and biblical truths to you with the encouragement that in these days you might wisely discern the motivating spirit behind the things that you see, hear or even read. For what appears to be, though we do not know, the time is drawing nearer for the coming again of Jesus. With that in mind scripture tells us that there will be false teachers come from within the church, and the evil one will be like a roaring lion roaming around seeking who he can deceive and devour.

At the same time 2Timothy 4:3-4 warns the church, "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."

I want to encourage you to be strong in your faith, grounded in your love relationship in Christ Jesus and become more and more knowledgeable with the wisdom and truths of Holy Scripture, for therein lay the truths of the ages, the mind of God, the Word of God, the handbook for this life and the one to come.

Blessings and Peace,
Bishop Bob