

HEAVEN IS FOR REAL? REALLY?

Steve Higginbotham, who preaches at the Karnes Church of Christ in the Knoxville area, once sent me an article entitled **Have You Earned Your Place In Heaven?** The main point was that we do not and cannot earn our way into heaven. Steve quoted from Michael Bloomberg, the billionaire former mayor of New York City, and former presidential candidate, who after donating \$50 million dollars to a gun control initiative is quoted as saying, “I am telling you, if there is a God, when I get to heaven I’m not stopping to be interviewed. I am heading straight in...I have earned my place in heaven.” We can never put God in debt. Steve wrote, “Do we, along with Mr. Bloomberg, need to be reminded that after all we could possibly do, we are still unprofitable servants ([Luke 17:10](#))? You see heaven is not a matter of attainment, it is a matter of atonement.” It is doubtful Mr. Bloomberg believes either in God or in heaven. I often wonder, how much do we really believe in heaven?

You’ve undoubtedly heard of the movie based on a book entitled **Heaven Is For Real?** This is another one of those “been there and done that” books about someone who died and went to heaven and then came back to tell us about it. This time it was about a boy who they claim was four years old at the time. The book was written by his father who was a denominational preacher. He said at the beginning he did not believe his son’s story, but the boy’s mother did. He said he became convinced when his son told him stories of the people he saw in heaven, including some family members whom they say the boy had never met. One of those was the boy’s great grandfather. The boy was being interviewed on a radio talk show the other day and said while in heaven he went around heaven with his great grandfather, who I think he called “pop.” The boy was not very convincing to me, and I understand he is young but much older than he was when his father said he began to tell him these stories. The descriptions he gave were very similar to the ones we are given in Scripture. He said that when he was not with his great grandfather, he was with Jesus. When the host asked him what Jesus looked like, he described him much like the pictures we always see. He said he was about six feet tall, with long brown hair and beard.

Two things here. One, I know John was an inspired man and he wrote as moved by the Holy Spirit, but we must remember he was a man describing spiritual things never before seen by human eyes. Secondly, Jesus was Jewish, not a fair complexioned European. We don’t know what He looked like, and now that He has a spiritual body, would he look anything like he did while on Earth?

The causes for these stories of after life experiences are not known for sure. Dr. John MacArthur, a denominational preacher, went so far as to say the whole thing was made up and that it had nothing to do with the Bible. Personally, I think some of them, if not all of them, are from opportunists who see a chance to make money. For those who may have had some experience when they were technically “dead,” I do not question what they say they saw, only the real reason behind it. If this helps someone believe in heaven and want to go there more, then it may serve a purpose ([Philippians 1:15-18](#)). As true believers we should not need such fanciful accounts to convince us that God lives and heaven exist. While I do not believe the young man’s story, I do believe that heaven is for real ([John 14:1-6](#)).