

“Heaven Is For Real” Movie

by Wayne Goff

I finally got around to watching the movie and must say that I am a little disappointed, but not overly surprised. The true-life story is about a four-year-old boy who seemingly goes to heaven during surgery for a ruptured appendix. He comes close to death, but survives. After his surgery, he begins to explain things to his parents which they cannot possibly account for — thus, the conclusion that he must have gone to heaven.

There have been numerous “near-death experiences” recorded, and a few movies made from them. Religion and science both have attempted to explain the mysteries which accompany the phenomenon, but neither can give a satisfactory explanation. I certainly do not have any answers, but I do have the New Testament to give me some parameters.

The apostle Paul spoke authoritatively about a “trip to heaven” which he made! He wrote: *“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago — whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows — such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows — how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter”* (2 Cor. 12:2-4).

Notice the facts: (1) Paul was unsure in what state the body was in; (2) Paul was caught up into Paradise and heard words which were not lawful to be repeated. He lists this in his personal *“visions and revelations of the Lord”* (v. 1) and does so when he is **forced** to boast by those who attempt to discredit him as an apostle and an evangelist. More than this, I don’t think anyone on earth knows.

God has revealed to us in His Word as much about heaven as he wants us to know. Luke 16:19-31 tells us as much about how one “**gets**” to Paradise or Torment as any Bible verse I know. Lazarus was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The text doesn’t say how the rich man got to Hades, but we know he did. Suffice it to say that God places more **emphasis** on *how* we live here in preparation for eternity, and we should do the same. The “near-death experiences” carry enough contradictions in them to make us more than a little cautious.

293001