

**Visions of Heaven**  
**Selected Scripture**  
**March 22, 2015**

## **Introduction**

I was reading some of the comments by those who have bought some of the books and was grieved by their comments. Some of the people treat the other person's visit(s) to heaven as gospel truth and offer so much hope. There is that word again—hope. I have said before that by hoping anything of this world—be it descriptions of heaven from someone other than the Bible or near death experiences—all those hope will die because they are of this world. I want us to look to the Bible for its description of heaven. It is solid and anchored to God Himself. When we fasten our hope to what God says, it purifies us and strengthens us.

I have selected some books about visits to heaven and near death experiences to compare those stories to what the Bible says.

## **I. What Others Say About Seeing Heaven?**

- So-called visions
  - Percy Collett
    - Wrote a book—“My Visit to Heaven”
    - Spent 5 and half days in heaven
      - Saw Jesus supervising building mansions in heaven (like a construction foreman)
      - He spoke face to face to the Holy Spirit
      - Animals in heaven—dogs don't bark though
      - Pity building—aborted babies are trained to grow up before meeting God
      - Garment building—angels sowing robes for believers
      - Elevator powered by the Holy Ghost to move around in heaven
      - Sea of Forgetfulness—Christians are required to tell God everything they have said or done, then all those past incidents are delivered into the Sea
  - Roberts Liardon
    - Wrote a book—“I Saw Heaven” (pub 1987)
    - He describes three experiences in heaven
      - First Experienced heaven when he was 8 years old
        - He did not die but was taken to heaven
        - He gives a very detailed description of Jesus
          - 5'-11" to 6 foot tall
          - Sandy brown hair—not too short and not too long
          - Looks like a perfect man
          - Jesus dunked Roberts in the River of Life
      - Heaven details
        - Storage buildings with human parts for blessings
          - 500 yards from the Throne of God
        - People in heaven only go in to the Throne of God through the front and then go out in the back door
      - Second experience he cannot share
      - Third experience, age 11, he was watching Laverne and Shirley
- Near death experiences
  - Dark tunnels with bright light at end

- Outer body experiences
- Hugely popular books—selling millions of copies
- Christians have marketed these books as “nonfiction”
  - Heaven is For Real
    - People have wings
    - Jesus’ own purple horse
    - Holy Spirit shooting down powers to earth
  - The Boy Who Came Back From Heaven
    - Sees a large hole in heaven—hole into Hell
    - Describes Satan more than other beings
    - Alex Malarkey said that all that was said was false
- All the accounts are **VERY DIFFERENT** from what the Bible says about Heaven

## II. Who in the Bible Has Seen Heaven?

- Isaiah

**Isaiah 6:1** *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple.*

- Why was he allowed to see heaven?

**Isaiah 6:8** *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for Us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

- Ezekiel

**Ezekiel 1:1** *In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.*

**Ezekiel 10:1** *I looked, and I saw the likeness of a throne of sapphire above the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim.*

- Why was he allowed to see heaven?

**Ezekiel 2:3-4** *He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against Me to this very day. 4 The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.'*

- John

**Revelation 4:1** *After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."*

**Revelation 5:1** *Then I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.*

- After writing to the 7 churches, Jesus wants him to write about the things to come (4:1)
- Their reaction

- They were stricken with fear before a holy and glorious God

**Isaiah 6:5** "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

**Ezekiel 1:28** Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around Him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of One speaking.

**Revelation 1:17** When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead. Then He placed His right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last."

- Micaiah

**2 Chronicles 18:18** Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne with all the host of heaven standing on His right and on His left.

**Note:** This is the prophet that predicted Ahab's death. One with Jehoshaphat

- Stephen

**Acts 7:55-56** But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. **56** "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

- Paul

**2 Corinthians 12:2-4** I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. **3** And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— **4** was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

- Unique experience
- He was told by God **not** to reveal what he has seen
- They were all alive—prophetic visions
  - Direct from God with a purpose
  - He is the One who gives them the vision
  - God did not use unbelievers or children
- No one who was raised from the dead had anything to say about heaven
  - Lazarus; Shumannite's son; the Widow of Nain's son

### III. What Did They See?

**Note:** What the writers are trying to do is describe what they see the best they can by using human terms through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. If one cannot understand this, then that is fine because they are attempting to describe something indescribable! It is beyond what we can say! God has given us a very small glimpse into heaven, and that is only if we see through a poor mirror imperfectly (**1 Corinthians 13:12**).

- Throne

**Revelation 4:2** *At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with Someone sitting on it.*

- Throne in heaven
  - Used 13 times in **chapter 4** (11 times to God's throne and 2 times—Elders)
  - Symbol of God's sovereign rule

**Isaiah 6:1** *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple.*

**Psalms 103:19** *The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.*

**Isaiah 66:1** *This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is My throne."*

- Throne in the Temple

**Revelation 16:17** *The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!"*

- God's holy reign

- On the Throne

**Revelation 4:3** *And the One who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.*

- Appearance of jasper and carnelian
- John is referring to the blazing light coming from God
  - Jasper—clear stone, like a diamond

**Revelation 21:11** *It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.*

- Carnelian—blood red ruby stone
- God is described in flashing, flaming light and color

- Other description of God

**Ezekiel 1:26-28** *Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. 27 I saw that from what appeared to be His waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down He looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded Him. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around Him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of One speaking.*

**Daniel 7:9-10** *As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of His head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. 10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before Him.*

- Whiteness, clarity, purity and blazing fire

- These men were entranced by God—their whole focus was on Him
- They were preoccupied with the majesty and grace of God whose glory fills the place
- Around the Throne

**Revelation 4:5-6** *From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. 6 Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, round the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.*

**Ezekiel 1:22** *Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked like an expanse, sparkling like ice, and awesome.*

**Exodus 24:9-10** *Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up 10 and saw the God of Israel. Under His feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.*

- All the men are trying to describe something that cannot be described (to the best of their ability!)
- Light is flashing, reflecting all around
- Heaven is totally bright and sparkling like ice (or dazzling crystal)
- There is NO darkness or shadow in heaven!

## Coram Deo

What God has given us is enough. It is a feast of hope to know that Heaven is a real place and it is a place of beauty and delight beyond our imagination. These men who saw heaven tried their best to describe it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but Heaven is so different and so much more than we have experienced on earth. We cannot understand it, describe it, or explain it. When people write books about their “experience” in heaven, we know their words are empty and hollow because their focus is on themselves and not on the One who fills heaven. Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up and was shaken to the core of his being. Ezekiel saw the blazing glory of the Lord and fell on the ground. John sees the unveiled, glorious Jesus Christ, and he falls on his face in fear as a dead man. The glory of God captivated them! It is God Himself that we long to see and He is in Heaven. We long to see His glory!

**2 Corinthians 3:18** *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

**1 John 3:2-3** *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*