

Faith Lens » Blog Archive » June 8-14, 2011– Seeing Jesus Face to Face

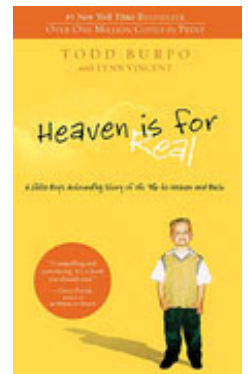
Contributed by Stephanie Opsal, West Des Moines

Warm-up Question

Have you seen Jesus in your life?

Seeing Jesus Face to Face

Todd Burpo's book, *Heaven is For Real*, has become a sensational "must-read" for many. Burpo describes his four-year-old son Colton's emergency surgery and his incredible trip to heaven and back when he loses consciousness during the surgery. Burpo can see that this is not just a dream. Colton knows about things he would not otherwise know, such as the locations of his parents during his surgery and the existence of his miscarried sister. In addition, he describes the true nature of the Triune God and confirms a great deal of Scripture.



This book is becoming popular across the globe, as evidenced by its spot on the New York Times best-seller list, printing over 1.5 million copies and attracting over 56,000 fans on facebook. What about this book draws so many people's attention?

People have an eagerness for experiencing the unknown, one reason mystery and sci-fi books and movies are quite popular. We cannot imagine how great heaven is going to be. At the mention of this indescribable place where no hurt remains and in which our hope resounds, we jump at the chance to catch a glimpse of God's majesty via an experience like Colton's.

The passage in Romans 8:18-25 comes to my mind. The apostle Paul discusses his current sufferings in prison as a minor step compared to the strong hope he has for the future, unseen glory of heaven that God will soon reveal. It is so exciting to hear about someone who saw Jesus face to face.

Discussion Questions

- Are you interested in reading this book?
- Have you or a loved one ever had a near-death experience? Do you have any stories from the situation?
- What do you think heaven will be like? Are you confident that by Jesus' death for us you will be there someday?

Scripture Texts (NRSV) for Sunday, June 12, 2011 (Day of Pentecost)

[Acts 2:1-21](#)

[1 Corinthians 12:3b-13](#)

[John 20:19-23](#)

(Text links are to [Oremus Bible Browser](#). Oremus Bible Browser is not affiliated with or supported by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. You can find the calendar of readings for Year C at [Lectionary Readings](#).)

For lectionary humor and insight, check the weekly comic [Agnus Day](#).

Gospel Reflection

In this short passage, the risen Jesus appears to the disciples through locked doors to offer them words of

peace and encouragement. But He also offers a much greater gift. Knowing he will soon ascend to heaven Jesus breathes his Spirit onto them and empowers them to do His work in the world. In the same way, we receive the Holy Spirit in our hearts as we put our trust in Jesus Christ. In John 14:12, Jesus tells His disciple Philip: "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." By the Spirit's power bestowed upon us by Christ, we can do even greater things on earth to fulfill God's purposes for us.

We can be just as excited as that little boy in *Heaven is for Real*. Colton saw Jesus in heaven, but we can also see Jesus right now, wherever we are, because the resurrected Savior lives in and through all His people! We are sent by Jesus just as the Father sent Him, to forgive others, love others, and share the truth of humanity's redemption through Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God within us directs our paths and accomplishes more than we ever could on our own: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Spend some time in prayer, asking Jesus to reveal His living presence to you and lead you in His plans for your life (Jer. 29:11).

The disciples were overjoyed to see that Jesus was alive and offering them peace, strength, and the direction of the Spirit (verse 20). We are blessed with the presence of Jesus in our hearts and in our lives. Strive to see the Lord today.

Discussion Questions

- What do you think would be your first response if you saw Jesus in the flesh today?
- Describe characteristics of the Holy Trinity including how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all work together as one true God.
- How can you see Jesus working through your life or the lives of others, even though He is present in Spirit now rather than in the flesh?
- Do you feel called to do something or change something in your life to become more like Jesus?
- How can we thank God for giving us the gift of His Holy Spirit?

Activity Suggestions

- Draw two pictures of Jesus, one of how you think He might look as a human and one of how you think His Spirit would look as He works through people's lives. (For example, a person doing a good deed or someone using his gift of art to paint a beautiful picture to hang up in the church or to give to someone in need).
- Read excerpts from *Heaven is For Real* and discuss what you think heaven will be like based on what the Bible says about it as well as your own thoughts.
- Use your Bible and concordance to look up other passages about ways the Holy Spirit lives and works through believers. What other words to Scripture use to refer to the Spirit; what does that say about the purpose of the Spirit's work in our lives and world?

Closing Prayer

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we praise you for rising from the dead and offering all of your disciples the lasting gift of your living presence in our lives. We humbly accept your leadership in our lives and pray that we be able to see you working in and through us to do your work in the world while we are here. We thank you for giving us hope for an eternal home with you in heaven one day. In Jesus' precious and holy name we pray, Amen.