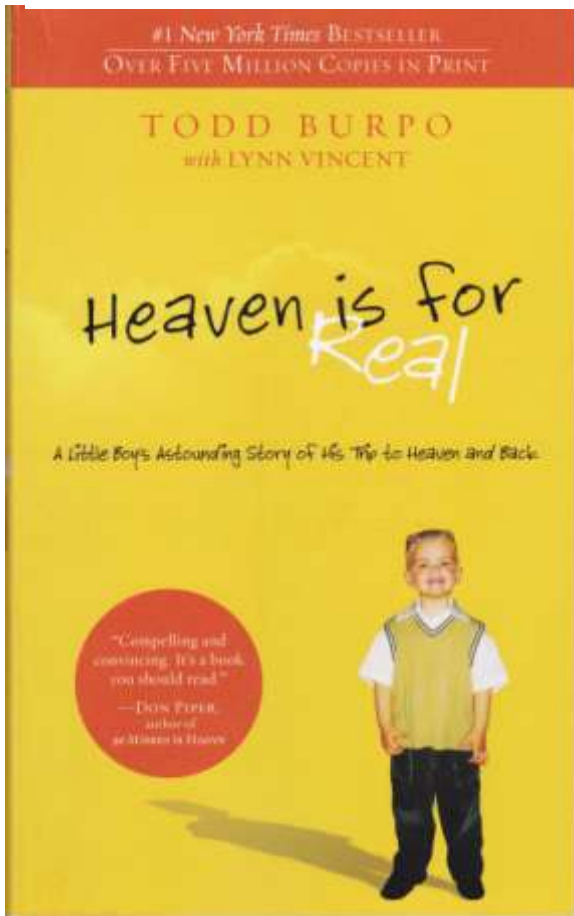


DID COLTON REALLY GO TO HEAVEN?



Colton was 3 years 10 months old when he underwent emergency surgery for an appendix that had ruptured days before. He almost died. After he recovered, he started sharing things about a heavenly experience that surprised, shocked, and blessed his parents over a period of time.

What follows are the excerpts of his statements in the book followed by my comments on what transpired. Most of what he relates is scriptural, or in the absence of direct biblical correlation, does not outright contradict scripture.

It is hard to discount the testimony of children, because they are innocent eye-witnesses who are trying to explain something that they might not fully understand. When his dad, Todd, a Wesleyan church pastor, purposely asked questions to try and trip him up, he always responded appropriately per what we know of the bible, doctrine and the faith.

Nevertheless, I've had to struggle with some things: Like everyone having wings, the need for angels to go about armed all the time in heaven, and Colton sitting with the Holy Spirit and praying for his dad and others. As I go through the book below, the various topics are discussed.

The book didn't get published until Colton was eleven years old and in sixth grade. Colton picked the title.

Prologue page xvii. "...the angels sang to me."

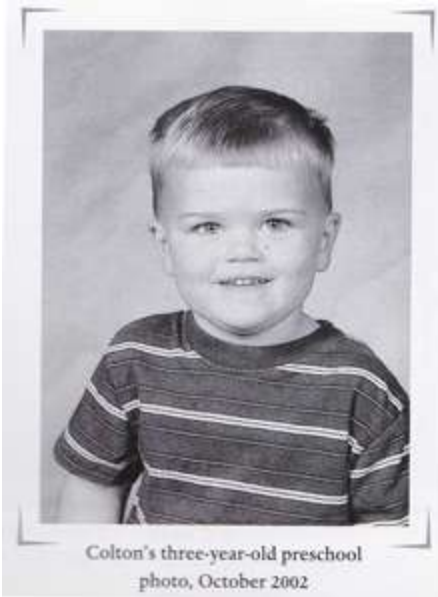
Prologue page xviii. "...they sang, *Jesus Loves Me* and *Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho*."

"I asked them to sing, *We Will, We Will Rock You*, but they wouldn't sing that."

Prologue page xix. "Dad, Jesus had the angels sing to me because I was so scared. They made me feel better."

"I was sitting in Jesus' lap."

These statements did not surprise me, since I had heard other stories of angels singing (Angels appear to sing in Luke 2:13-14, where the word "saying" and "singing" are thought to be synonymous in certain passages: also Rev 5:8-11, Job 38:7). **When the five missionaries died** (1956 Ecuador, Wadodani Indians), **an eye-witness reported she heard the angels singing in the tree tops - a strange music to her that she later identified with choir music. In this case, Jesus asked them to sing to comfort Colton.**



So Colton was in heaven, but he was still scared.

He was sitting on Jesus' lap and was still scared.

But he quickly warmed up to them and enjoyed the songs.

He probably sang the songs with them. I wonder if Jesus joined in.

They sang children songs familiar to him, but they would not sing a secular song.

Is it possible that Jesus could be in more than one place at a time?

Or, if not, when he is spending time with you in heaven, that "time" is frozen in place, so he can then go off and do other things and spend "time" with others, while on earth, no time takes place at all? So that in heaven, time is practically (or literally) frozen in place, for God's purposes.

p56. "Jesus told me to be nice."

This sounds like Fatherly advice for a three year old, like *be good*.

He remembered that Jesus told him this, and although a generalized statement, it is could be argued that that is what Jesus wants from all of us. *Just be good!*

p57. [Speaking of a man who died]. "He had to have Jesus in his heart! He had to know Jesus to get into heaven!"

In the book, Colton was very emphatic, upset, and insistent about this. It must have been part of what all he was learning about while in heaven. This is the essence of the Gospel message, that we must accept Jesus as our Savior to get to heaven.

We also learn later from Colton that knowing Jesus is the only way to get a new body. That statement made me wonder: Is there a heaven-like place for some people but without resurrected bodies? Or are those people without resurrected bodies simply not going to be in heaven?

Also, we learn later that Jesus explained to him the purpose of salvation – *to know God the Father*.

That is the goal – to know the Father. The bible says Jesus told the disciples that he was going to heaven to prepare a place for us. So it seems that he must also prepare us for that place. The preparation would be about knowing the Father better and better, then our arrival in heaven would be more of a homecoming event. We would not be strangers showing up there, but already part of the family.

P63. "Did you know Jesus had a cousin? Jesus told me his cousin baptized him."

"I don't remember his name, but he was really nice."

"...did you know Jesus has a horse?"

"...a rainbow horse. I got to pet him. There's lots of colors."

"In heaven, Dad. That's were all the rainbow colors are."

It is at this point that his dad realizes Colton actually went to heaven. He had previously thought Colton had been visited by Jesus or angels, etc.

It seems that Colton got a tour of heaven, meets the family (John the Baptist, Mary, God, Holy Spirit), sat in the throne room next to the Holy Spirit, and met the horse Jesus rides. We know from Revelation that Jesus rides a white horse (Rev 6:2, 19:11). Was the rainbow effect for 3 year old Colton's benefit? Were the colors static or moving? Iridescent?

p65. "...Jesus has markers. And he has brown hair and he has hair on his face. And his eyes...oh, Dad, his eyes are so pretty!"

"He had purple on."

"His clothes were white, but it was purple from here to here." [Making a motion like a sash from left shoulder to right hip].

"Jesus was the only one in heaven who had purple on..."

"And he has this gold thing on his head..."

p66. "Yeah, a crown, and it had this...this diamond thing in the middle of it and it was kind of pink. And he has markers..."

The markers are described again later, when Colton says they are only on his hands and feet.

Colton describes Jesus dressed in royalty, but from the picture of him we see later, he didn't wear all of this all the time. Only Jesus wore the purple sash and gold crown with the pinkish diamond in the middle.

The sash seems to be a rank indicator in heaven. Angels have yellow.

This is one of those times when you are reminded that a three year old is describing things. He only knew enough to describe the "markers" but had not learned what they were or what they meant. It is these

p67. "Red, Daddy. Jesus has red markers on him." Dad, "Colton, where are Jesus' markers?"

Without hesitation, he stood to his feet. He held out his right hand, palm up and pointed to the center of it with his left. Then he held up his left palm and pointed with his right hand. Finally, Colton bent over and pointed to the tops of both feet. "That's where Jesus' markers are, Daddy."

It is statements like this that are irrefutable. Unassailable. Pure three year old. If a person was not content with some of Colton's statements because they didn't fit a certain theology, you would have to remember that it is the best a three year old can report. So the problem is not in the reporter or in the story itself; but rather, if there is a problem, it is with us. We are biased and have preconceived ideas, and centuries of understanding on what the bible is telling us or trying to tell us, and even what truth is.

For myself, I take all of this to the bank and then try to see how my theology is informed.

p71. Well, what did you do in heaven? his father asked. "Homework." "Jesus was my teacher."

p72. "Jesus gave me work to do, and that was my favorite part of heaven."

David Bena once told me that he thought we would have work to do and things to learn in heaven. I had always thought that we would be omniscient and know all things upon getting into heaven. Instead it seems we will continue to learn things. I'm guessing my brain won't leak there, and I'll be able to completely retain everything learned – perhaps even a photographic memory or some other specially quick memory download of some kind.

Will we all bring our languages and cultures to heaven, or will we have a new language and culture as citizens of heaven? A heavenly universal language? In James Fenimore Cooper's book, *Deerslayer*, he speculates on what heaven would be like for the red man. Would they actually go to a *happy hunting ground* sort of place, because that was their best understanding of heaven? And why not?

There were lots of kids..."

"Everybody's got wings...but mine weren't very big."

"We flew. Well, all except for Jesus. He was the only one in heaven who didn't have wings. Jesus just went up and down like an elevator."

If there was any controversial point in the book for me, this would be it. This one causes me to stop and pause. Wings? Everyone had wings? Reminds me of a verse in Isaiah 60:8. Isaiah has a vision of the Glory of Zion and says, "Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nest?" (nests can also be translated as windows). I have this idea of people going out their windows to visit each other. People could fly around to get to where they wanted.

Did Colton actually see everyone with wings? Did John the Baptist have wings and Mary? He says everyone had wings except Jesus. The angels came with Jesus to visit Abraham (Genesis 18:2-19:22), and they didn't have wings. So are wings something that can be visible in heaven but not on earth, even though they are still there?

And is there any correlation between having wings and the resurrection of the body from the dead? Jesus was the first of our group to be resurrected and he didn't have wings. So when the body is resurrected at the sound of the last trump (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18) and united with our soul, do we still have wings? Do we need them? Are wings really necessary? If Jesus can move around without wings, why wouldn't anyone else be able to do that? Or learn that? after the resurrection.

p73. "Everyone kind of looks like angels in heaven...all the people have a light above their head."



I have heard that the reason there are halos around the heads of Jesus and saints in old art paintings was that people, at times, had seen a glow around the heads of holy people. Perhaps even Jesus at times. In the book of Acts, Stephen seemed to glow as he shared the gospel at his stoning (Acts 6:15, "...and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel"). Moses had a glow about him when he came down off Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:29-35).

p75. "And they have yellow from here to here." [Speaking of the sash angels have].

All angels have yellow sashes. This apparently distinguishes them from people. The various sashes must have a significance that might be based on our rewards in heaven, rank, and responsibility. Perhaps also privileges.

Why yellow sashes? I mean, are there people without sashes who could be mistaken for angels? In the organizational scheme of things, are there conditions of service or merit based on the sashes, and even something going on among angels?

p76. "Colton, you said you were in heaven and you did all these things...a lot of things. How long were you gone?" My little boy looked me right in the eye and didn't hesitate, "Three minutes."

What is time? It is the method we use to measure the passage of events *in the physical universe*. Our own system is based on the earth's rotation which distinguishes day and night, and the orbit around the sun to describe years. $E=MC^2$ Einstein described time mathematically as Energy being equivalent to Mass times the speed of light squared (C^2). But in heaven, where energy, mass and light are not bound by our universe, time would have little or no meaning, at least as we understand it. God is the source of light, and we know from scripture that he is the alpha and omega, suggesting he can see the beginning and the end of eternity. And from Colton's story, that is confirmed. Revelation 22:13, "*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.*"

p81. "Daddy, remember when I yelled for your name in the hospital when I waked up? Well, the reason I was yelling was that Jesus came to get me. He said I had to go back because he was answering your prayer. That's how come I was yelling for you."

Colton prayed for his dad, he saw prayers being answered, and he saw the Holy Spirit at work. Colton knew his return was in answer to his dad's prayers. Jesus told him that. Many other people were praying, including his mom, but Jesus said he went back because his dad asked.

What do we know about his dad's prayers? They were very passionate and he was very mad at God. He held nothing back. Fervent. Anguish. Real. Jesus chose to answer his prayer. Personally. It reminds me that God hears the cries of his people. He collects their tears (Psalm 56:8, "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book" NLT).

Does this mean that prayers of anguish are more easily heard and answered? That my prayer that is gut-wrenching and passionate is more powerful and heaven-felt? What does this mean – "*From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.*" (Matthew 11:12)? What is it about these forceful men that allows them to lay ahold of the kingdom of heaven? Could it be passionate, heart-felt, gut-wrenching prayer?

p86. "He's really nice...Yeah, I got to stay with him [speaking of his grandfather, called Pop].

I would have liked to know more about this one. Colton got to stay with him. A house? An apartment? Did they hang out and go fishing or something? What did they do? Fly around the neighborhood? What did they talk about? On page 88, we learn that his grandfather described spending time with his dad, Todd, when he was a little kid the age of Colton.

p87. "Oh, Dad. Pop has really big wings! My wings were really little, but Pop's were big! He had white on, but blue [sash] here."

Colton relates that he met his grandfather who had died before he was born. Later we learn that he was sitting by the Holy Spirit, praying, when his grandfather came and introduced himself. We don't know exactly how information gets transmitted around heaven, but Colton had been there some time before his grandfather either heard about it or was able to come and see him. There is no indication that anything was done wrong when the grandfather entered the scene, although it almost sounds like he interrupted something that was going on – that

can't happen in heaven, can it? An unplanned interruption? Wouldn't we be able to read each other's thoughts? Or wouldn't the Holy Spirit or God or Jesus call the grandfather and ask him to come see Colton at that time, so there really isn't an interruption?

p91. "Oh, yes! Jesus said he went to Daddy and told him he wanted Daddy to be a pastor and Daddy said yes, and Jesus was really happy."

I can relate to this story, because I felt like Jesus also called me to start New Hope Anglican Church.

Jesus was really happy. Todd decided to serve as a pastor, which Jesus had wanted him to do, and that made Jesus happy – really happy. Obedience. In God's perfect will. Jesus very happy.

So Jesus goes to Todd and says he wants him to pastor a church. I have heard the audible voice of God in my head, but most of the time I have an "impression" of what is wanted, needed, or required. I act on it, often with confidence, because over time I have become more and more familiar with this "impression" and how it works and what to expect from it – and from myself. It's like there are rules in place since the foundation of the earth that prevent God from speaking plainly to us, unless you're Moses (Exodus 33:11) or a prophet (Jeremiah 1:5; Amos 7:14-17) or something. For the rest of us common folk, it is a smidgen above guessing and wonder.

p94. "Mommy, I have two sisters. You had a baby die in your tummy, didn't you?" Mother, "Who told you that?!" "She did, Mommy. She said she died in your tummy."

p95. "It's okay, Mommy. She's okay. God adopted her." Mother, "Don't you mean Jesus adopted her?" "No, Mommy. His Dad did!"

"She looks a lot like Cassie [older sister]." She is just a little bit smaller, and she has dark hair."

p96. "In heaven, this little girl ran up to me, and she wouldn't stop hugging me."

Mommy asked, "What was her name?"

Colton answered, "She doesn't have a name. You guys didn't name her."

Mommy, "You're right, Colton, we didn't even know she was a she."

"Yeah, she said she just can't wait for you and Daddy to get to heaven."

Stillborn kids are in heaven and adopted by God. I would then assume then that kids who were aborted are there also. Adopted by God.

What does it mean to be adopted by the Father himself? That was a keen distinction. How is that different for them, versus being cared for by angels or in some other fashion like the other kids? Why adopted by God himself and not Jesus? Is it because God is absolutely pure love and they deserve that because of a life cut short before it even began? Is it then like a reward?

If the parents named her now, today, would she know it in heaven and start going by that name? Would that change her status in heaven? Probably not. It also indicates that the children who die seem to keep on growing. I would guess then that they grow into young adults and eventually appear approximately the same as everyone else.

My younger brother Tim died when he was three. He would probably look like a healthy 30 year old.

p100. Speaking of the throne of God. Todd asked him, "Hey, Colton, when you were in heaven, did you ever see God's throne?"

Colton said, "What's a throne, Daddy?"

Todd, "A throne is like the king's chair. It's the chair that only the king can sit in."

"Oh, yeah! I saw it a bunch of times!" Todd, "Well, what did God's throne look like?"

"It was big, Dad...*really, really* big, because God is the biggest one there is. And he really, really loves us, Dad. You can't believe how much he loves us!"

"And did you know that Jesus sits right next to God? Jesus chair is right next to his Dad's!"

Colton never says that God speaks. But he feels the love of God somehow, probably just radiating off him. And he's probably told by everyone that God loves them. God is bigger than everyone else. Much bigger. Sitting on the throne. Is there ever a time when he is not on the throne? Is it possible for God to leave the throne? To stand up? How much bigger is bigger? Twice as big? Why?

Is this all of God in human form on the throne, or is there more of God somewhere else? In other words, is what we see all of God to be seen? Is this throne the single focal point of his presence and power? Would that then be considered the spiritual center of the universe? And is it the center of the known universe, spiritual and physical and anything else?

p101. Todd asks, "Colton, which side of God's throne was Jesus sitting on?" "Well, pretend like you're in God's throne. Jesus sat right there," he said, pointing to my right side.

Todd, "Who sits on other side?"

"Oh, that's easy, Dad. That's where the angel Gabriel is. He's really nice."

I was expecting him to say Michael was next to God on the other side. From the Book of Daniel, I was thinking that Michael was also an archangel and the leader of them all. Then where was Michael and the others? Were they off fighting? It seems like there is an ongoing war there. Then Michael would be a general. (Daniel 10:13, 10:21, 12:1 Jude 1:9, Rev 12:7 - all speak of Michael as the great prince who protects the people. In Revelation 12:7 it says, "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back...")

p102. Todd, "Where did you sit, Colton?"

"They brought a little chair for me. I sat by God the Holy Spirit. Did you know that God is three persons, Dad?"

The Trinity. Colton doesn't go into any more detail. His answer is matter of fact and tossed out along with all of the other incredible things. He just assumes we know this, understand what it is, and know how it works. The Trinity has been a place of wonder, concern, debate, fights, and controversy. The Nicene Creed was developed in part to combat disputes in this area of doctrine, and the Athanasian Creed that followed was developed specifically to combat heresy in this area.

"I was sitting by God the Holy Spirit because I was praying for you. You needed the Holy Spirit, so I prayed for you."

Colton was in heaven, and he was praying for his dad. He knew somehow that his dad needed the Holy Spirit, so he prayed for him to get it. We learn later that Todd received a shot of power from the Holy Spirit for a specific task – a Sunday morning sermon.

But does that then mean that the saints are praying for us? That our loved ones are praying for us when we have needs? Does that mean we should be praying to Saint Christopher for protection before we travel, because he could then be praying for us? Look out Catholics and Orthodox, here we come!

But think about this: Colton was praying for his dad, but his dad was not praying for Colton or to Colton. His dad was praying to God in Jesus' name for help and support in his ministry. And it seems that Colton was sitting next to the Holy Spirit for the specific purpose of praying for his dad. I wonder if this was part of his homework? Either he could tell that his dad had the need or someone told him his dad had the need and what to pray for, perhaps, even how to pray and where to sit when praying.

So should I be praying to relatives? Can I ask them to pray for me in heaven? To also watch over me? What would it hurt? Can I ask my little brother, Tim, to pray for me about something? What would it hurt? I mean, is he praying for me at times when I ask God to help in a certain area?

p103. Todd asked, "What does God look like? God the Holy Spirit?"

Colton replied, "Hmm, that's kind of a hard one...he's kind of blue."

What does this mean? I'm thinking he is not painted blue, but rather might have something of a glow about him, an aura. What would a picture look like? I understood that the Holy Spirit was spirit and could be in a million places at one time, answering prayers all over the world at the same time. But while that is most certainly true, he was also able to sit by a little boy and teach him how to pray. Did he speak? Colton never says that the Holy Spirit spoke one word out loud.

Todd asked, "You met Pop [Todd's grandfather] sitting by the Holy Spirit?"

Colton, "Yep. Pop came up to me and said, 'Is Todd your dad?' And I said yes. And Pop said, 'He's my grandson.'"

That would make *Pop* Colton's great grandfather, who died *before* he was born.

p104. Todd has always approached these talks with Colton with a little skepticism. At this point, he tried to trick him. He said, "So when it got dark and you went home with Pop, what did you two do?"

He write that Colton got suddenly serious and scowled at him, "It doesn't get dark in heaven! God and Jesus light up heaven, Dad! Who told you that!"

His dad responded, "What do you mean it doesn't get dark?"

Colton said, "God and Jesus light up heaven. It never gets dark. It's always bright."

He didn't exactly explain this either. He assumes we just get it – in a sense I do. Scripture tells us that God is Light(1 John 1:5, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." - the light of heaven. I can see God radiating the light of his holiness, what we would call his glory (ref Exodus 33:19, 22; Rev 21:23, "The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp." Also, Rev 22:5)). I can see Jesus radiating the light of holiness. But to light up heaven means it is like the sun. It must go out and somehow be an all encompassing light that lights everywhere all the time.

Now let's look at physics: I would even suggest that the objects of heaven, since they are created by God and exist there because of him, probably give off an ambient glow along with their colors – like a backlit screen. Colton said the colors were bright and more distinct, which makes me think that a color is so bright because it is actually glowing in that color, unlike on earth, where colors are reflected.

p105. [Gates of heaven]. “They were made of gold and there were pearls on them.” The heavenly city itself was made of something shiny, “like gold or silver.” The flowers and trees in heaven were “beautiful,” and there were animals of every kind.

First, don't get heaven and the New Jerusalem mixed up. When John tells us in Rev 21:1 that the old earth and the old heaven passed away and a new heave and new earth are there, he is referring to the planet and the atmosphere around it, not the spiritual place called heaven: What Paul called the third heaven, 1 Cor 12:2 – the first heaven is our atmosphere, the second heaven in the starry realm, and the third heaven is the spiritual place). The New Jerusalem is a created thing – a city and space ship. The New Jerusalem is a cube that is so huge, one side would go from Seattle to San Diego. Inside the cube is a city called the Holy City, New Jerusalem (Rev 21:2, 10), but the whole cube is referred to as the New Jerusalem.

Rev 21:10, “...and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, (1) coming down (2) out of heaven (3) from God.” So God sent it from the spiritual place called heaven, it is floating or flying down, and he is also in the New Jerusalem, or a part of him is there. He sent it, but he is also in it. I mean, if he is sitting on a throne, and he created the known universe, I'm guessing what we see on the throne is a miniscule, true representational piece of his complete self.

I still think of heaven as a spiritual place of unlimited everything – no distance, no time, no boundaries. I thought we could go places at the speed of thought – think “it” and be standing on the surface of the Moon or Mars. I don't know if that is true or fanciful thinking due to a lifetime of reading science fiction. But the New Jerusalem is not heaven, and heaven is not on the surface of the planet. It is the place where God dwells, and from where he sent the New Jerusalem. The planet itself is finite and will eventually pass away. The New Jerusalem is mobile and can move through space to different locations.

Where would you go? Why would we go? We will not be floating around playing harps and gazing starry eyed at each other. God must have lots of things planned, missions for us, things for us to learn, invent, build, and places to go all over the universe. If Satan could cause wreckage and destruction, perhaps we have to undo his mischief and fix things all over the universe – starting here at home with him. We know that when he fell from heaven, he took a third of the stars with him (Rev 12:4). Could it be that a third of the stars of the known universe are problem areas we need to address to make things right? Do stars represent stars only or angels assigned to them? (ref Rev 12:7-9). Because Satan is conquered, does that mean the stars might still be in rebellion? And there millions of billions of stars...

p106. “Hey Dad, Jesus told me to tell you, he really loves children.”

Todd, Colton's dad, said that Colton went on and on about how much Jesus loves children until finally, they had to ask him to stop. It seems that children represent the best of us and of what the kingdom of God is all about (Luke 18:15-17). In this light, caring for and nurturing children who have been wounded and neglected by the world would be a high calling.

p111. [Why did Jesus die on the cross?]. “Well, Jesus told me he died on the cross so we could go see his Dad.”

This is a beautiful summary of the Gospel and the whole bible and the whole reason for everything.

p121. “Dad, nobody’s old in heaven. And nobody wears glasses.”

p122. Todd called his mother and got a picture of his grandfather, Pop, when he was a very young man. He showed the picture to Colton and he said, “Hey! How did you get a picture of Pop?”

It seems that in heaven, we are seen as we would appear in our prime – 20 to 30 ish.

p125. Talking to his mom and bedtime, he related, “I’ve seen power shot down to Daddy. Jesus shoots down power for Daddy when he’s talking. Yeah, at church. When he’s telling Bible stories to people.”

p126. The next morning, Todd asked him about it, “What’s the power like?”

Colton replied, “It’s the Holy Spirit. I watched him. He showed me.”

Todd asked, “The Holy Spirit?” Colton said, “Yeah. He shoots down power for you when you’re talking in church.”

This is intriguing. Power shot down. What we might describe as a special anointing for ministry. In this case, his dad got a special anointing when preaching on Sunday mornings.

p132. They had watched The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe, and his mom said, “Well, I guess that’s one thing you didn’t like about heaven – no swords up there.”

He quickly replied, “There are too swords in heaven!”

p133. His mom said, “Um...okay. Why do they need swords in heaven?”

He replied, “Mom, Satan’s not in hell yet. The angels carry swords so they can keep Satan out of heaven!”

Is heaven vulnerable? Is Jesus recruiting people so we have enough of an army to finally defeat Satan, and we can’t do it yet? Building an army?

Todd said, “Hey Colton, I bet you asked if you could have a sword, didn’t you?”

He writes, at that Colton’s scowl melted into a dejected frown, and his shoulders slumped toward the floor. “Yeah, I did. But Jesus wouldn’t let me have one. He said I’d be too dangerous.”

Too dangerous? To himself or others? It is a tactful answer that will bless him in years to come as he considers the possibilities.

p134. Since they had been talking about keeping Satan out of heaven, Todd asked, “Did you see Satan?” He writes, “At this, Colton’s body went rigid, he grimaced, and his eyes narrowed to a squint. He stopped talking. I mean, he absolutely shut down, and that was it for the night. We asked Colton about Satan a couple of times after that, but then gave up because whenever we did, his reaction was a little disconcerting: it was as if he changed instantly from a sunny little kid to someone who ran to a safe room, bolted the door, locked the windows, and pulled down the blinds. It became clear that in addition to rainbows, horses, and golden streets, he had seen something unpleasant. And he didn’t want to talk about it.”

This is bothersome. How lightly we seem to have taken Satan. What did Colton see? Whatever it was, it was deathly frightening and disturbing: and to me alarming. Satan is a creature of incredibly and immense evil – he is pure anti-God. It sounds like he is always probing for weaknesses in the fabric and place of heaven, the boundaries. Why are there walls and gates around a certain area? To keep Satan out.

This intimates that the heaven we are most interested in might be a limited area. A fenced in area. Protected. Patrolled. Armed. I had always thought of heaven as unlimited, and now I think it is an enclave of sorts. In the Matrix, Neo is given the choice of the blue pill of blissful ignorance, or the red pill of truth and reality. He eats the red pill and wakes up in the real world which is at war with the machines – a bleak, desperate landscape of survivors and fighters.

We choose Jesus, and the upshot of it is that we are at war with Satan on earth, and when we get there, we will be given a sword or bow and arrows, shuffled into the line somewhere, and given responsibilities to defend or attack as the case may be. A world at war. We are on the winning side, but a world at war.

What wounds do you inflict on immortal beings or receive in turn? If you are hacked up, how are you reconstituted? How do you turn the tide of a fight? Knowing we are on the winning side is good for contemplating the end game, but what about up until then?

p136. "I know. He's in heaven [speaking of his great grandfather Pop]. He's got a new body. Jesus told me if you don't go to heaven, you don't get a new body."

"There's going to be a war, and it's going to destroy this world. Jesus and the angels and the good people are going to fight against Satan and the monsters and the bad people. I saw it."

First, Colton seems to be referring to the resurrection. Those who believe in Jesus are resurrected to eternal life. Those who do not are sent to hell. (Rev 20:11-15).

There's going to be a war and it's going to destroy the world we know.

I guess that pretty much summarizes the last part of the book of Revelation. In the book of Revelation, there is a war and then 1,000 years of peace. At the end of what we call the Thousand-Year Millennial Reign of Jesus, Satan is released from prison in hell and quickly deceives the nations into attacking Jerusalem again. After this attack, related to in the book of Joel, the earth is completely destroyed and Satan is locked up forever. We are told that a new earth and a new heaven are created then.

Why are we waiting? Could it be that the quantity of warriors necessary to ensure victory are still to be won in their decisions for Christ? Was Satan given a timetable, and God is sticking to it.

I don't think the fight Colton is referring to is the one in the Valley of Armageddon, but rather the final war spoken of by the prophet Joel in the Valley of Jehosephat. The rapture of the church takes place at the Second Coming of Jesus and those people in the rapture witness the Second Coming of Jesus.

But after the Thousand Year Reign there is a final battle, and every angel and human will be in this one. Colton tells us that in the fight Satan is there and monsters. Later, he describes the monsters as being like dragons. We know there are scorpion spirits and python spirits. What is the dragon about?

Then he says there are bad people with Satan – who are they? Are they wicked people who died and were able, somehow, to join up with him? Or, is Colton describing demons who look and act like us? Or, are they fallen angels, since the bible tells us a third of heaven fell with him? Or, is it the nations and armies allied against Jerusalem and God that he sees on the ground in the Valley of Jehosephat? Could it be all of the above?

"In heaven, the women and the children got to stand back and watch. So I stood back and watched. But the men, they had to fight. And Dad, I watched you. You had to fight too."

Colton says his dad, Todd, is there in the fight and that didn't surprise me. But what did surprise me was the idea of women and children standing back and watching. I've known some mousy men who cringed at the thought of a hang nail, and I've known some Amazon women who I would fear to meet in personal combat. Through the eyes of a three year old and the limited viewing he might have had, this could be a generalized statement as he described his immediate company.

But I also thought that sex was irrelevant, null and void, or something else in heaven. Speaking to the Saducees, he said: "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at His teaching. (Matthew 22:23-33. See also Mark 12:18-27, Luke 20:27-40), but there seems to be an element of this that is difficult to understand or comprehend. I haven't had a chance to talk to any angels lately, but the inference here is that the angels are either without sex; or, it could mean that the angels are male and female, but there is no marriage institution as we know it.

p137. [Asked to describe the monsters]. "Yeah, like dragons and stuff."

p138. [What do we fight with?]. "You either get a sword or a bow and arrow, but I don't remember which."

Okay, I'm putting my order in now for a sword.

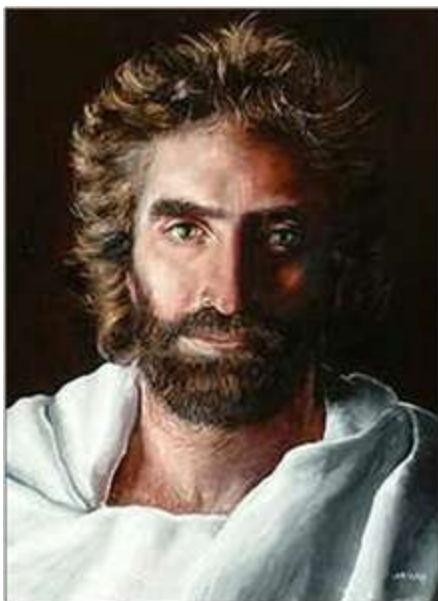
Todd replied, "My face fell. 'You mean I have to fight monsters with a sword?'"

Colton replied, "Yeah, Dad, but it's okay. Jesus wins. He throws Satan into hell. I saw it."

His dad said, "Well, son, I guess if Jesus wants me to fight, I'll fight."

Colton said, "Yeah, I know, Dad. You will."

Always good to know you're on the winning team.



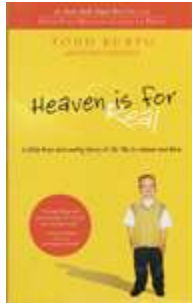
p142-143. Akiana Kramarik described visits to heaven that started at 4 years old. She said of Jesus, "He's pure. He's very masculine, really strong and big. And his eyes are just beautiful." She began painting at age 6. Turns out, Colton described Jesus exactly the same way.

p145. After showing Colton many different pictures of Jesus, which he found all wrong, his dad showed him this one done by Akiana and he said, "Dad, that one's right."

p145. Todd writing, "We were pretty sure no painting could ever capture the majesty of the person of the risen Christ. But after three years of examining Jesus pictures, we did know that Akiane's rendering was not only a departure from typical paintings of Jesus; it was also the only one that had ever stopped Colton in his tracks."

p152. When asked about animals in heaven, Colton said he saw dogs, birds, and a lion, and the lion was friendly.

p152-153. "He saw Mary kneeling before the throne of God and at other times, standing beside Jesus. 'She still loves him like a mom,' Colton said."



Heaven is for Real Under Attack? Colton Burpo Talks About the Truth

17 January 2015 - by Noelle Nicholas

In light of a recent development where one young boy reveals that his experience in Heaven is not real, Colton Burpo, the subject of the book-turned-movie *Heaven is for Real*, is speaking out about the details of his own life. He wants us to know that his story is true, and that Jesus "really, really loves you."

Recently, Alex Malarkey, *The Boy Who Went to Heaven*, revealed that his story is not real and did not happen. At the time he made up the tale, he was only 6-years-old and had no personal knowledge of the Bible. "When I made the claims that I did, I had never read the Bible. People have profited from lies, and continue to. They should read the Bible, which is enough. The Bible is the only source of truth."

After reading the Bible and understanding that what he did was wrong, Alex has taken on the daunting task of publicly declaring his mistake.

Backlash from the Malarkey incident is surely causing extreme pressure for Colton Burpo and his family, especially since the stories are so similarly titled. According to *Christian Today*, Colton has released a statement on his website. As it turns out, *Heaven is for Real* really is a true tale.

"Dear friends, I know there has been a lot of talk about the truth of other heaven stories in the past few days. I just wanted to take a second and let everyone know that I stand by my story found in my book 'Heaven is for Real.'"

When he was 4-years-old, Colton Burpo underwent emergency surgery to have his appendix removed. It was during this time the boy says he went to Heaven, met Jesus, and saw Mary and the angels. When he woke from the procedure, he was full of excitement and inspiration. Having experienced heaven firsthand, he wants to share the love of Jesus with everyone.

"I still remember my experience in Heaven. I want to keep telling people about my experience because it has given hope to so many people. People have their doubts about my story. But the thing is, I wasn't coaxed into doing this. I wanted to tell people about my experience. In fact, I started sharing my story with my friends and people in our town way before there was a book called 'Heaven is for Real.'"