

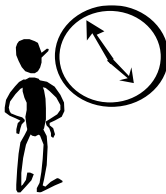
THE BATTLE CREEK BULLETIN

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Time of Assembly



Every other Sunday:

Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.

OR

Bible Study	4:00 p.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study	7:00 p. m.
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Going Home

By Fanning Yater Tant

Gospel Guardian, October 13, 1955

The summer's work has ended. After a long and lonely absence, I am going back to Texas. Only a few hours ago I was speaking to a house filled with people in Sunnyvale, California. Now it is shortly after midnight, and I am nearly three miles above the Mojave Desert, flying almost six miles per minute in the direction of—home! There are eighty-one of us in this monster of the skies, five crewmembers, and seventy-six passengers. We left Oakland airport an hour ago and will set down at Love Field in Dallas about daybreak. One brief stop there to change planes, and by the middle of the morning, I shall be home.

There are few words in any language that have the power to grip the heart and stir emotions as does the word "home." All that is sacred and holy, all that is tender and loving clusters around the word. The memories of childhood, the smiles, and tears of youthful years, the security of love and devotion, the hallowed associations of the past are wrapped up in the word. In early years home is the place of mother and father, perhaps brothers and sisters; in later years home is the place of husband or wife, and perhaps children. Bereft indeed is that poor soul who has no home. But infinitely more wretched is he who has never had a home!

Surely it is not without cause that Christ has pictured to us the Christian relationship in terms of home and family. God is our Father; we are his children. Christ is our brother, and we are brethren one to another. It was not to the Ephesians alone, but to all the faithful of every age that Paul wrote, "*So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*" ([Ephesians 2:19](#)).

Now we are over Nevada. The pulsing roar of the four

mighty engines seems to make this leviathan of the air a living creature. The stars in the sky as I look out my window are big and luminous. Most of the passengers are sleeping. But I cannot sleep. I have been gone too long. The eagerness of "going home" is too great. Here and there I can make out the dim, crawling light of an automobile on the desert floor, thousands of feet below. There are not many, and they seem to move at a snail's pace. Perhaps some of these people are going home, too. The same eagerness and anticipation that fills my heart may be theirs. Likely it is so. For we are all of us cut from the same cloth. Our needs, our hopes, our fears, and our joys are pretty much of a pattern. And the God who made us knows what is best for us. He has made provision with loving and infinite care.

Mile after mile slips by in the darkness below. And every mile brings me closer home. Already we are in Arizona, and then we shall sail through the star-studded skies of New Mexico, and on into Texas. My thoughts are nostalgic as we cross the miles. It was to New Mexico (Alamogordo, and then Hope) that my father brought his family when I was still too young to go to school — more than forty years ago. Indeed, my earliest memories are not of Tennessee, the state of my birth, but of the wild grandeur of the Sacramento Mountains and the then curious, but now famous White Sands. It was here in New Mexico that I had my first acquaintance with death. A beloved sister (oldest in the family) had stayed in Tennessee with her husband when the rest of us moved west. And now comes the fateful wire that tells us we shall see her face no more. My father does not weep; he can not. His misery is beyond tears. As I sit in this plane, high in the heavens, I can see him once again at his table upstairs, writing, writing, writing, endlessly writing. I approach to ask him about Davis, but I can not speak for the aching lump in my throat. He raises his head and sees me standing there in childish grief. He puts his pencil down and takes me up into his lap — a rare thing indeed for him, for he was a man of deep emotions, but inarticulate and undemonstrative concerning them. Finally, I realize he is weeping, and of course, I weep too. He speaks one brief word, "Your sister has gone home to live with God."

Home! It won't be long now. It will only be a few hours until I sit at my desk and try to type down the thoughts that fill my heart at this moment. And it will only be a few years until I see once again those dear faces in that eternal home, where sorrow and death can never come. My honored sire has slept these fourteen years beneath the blue skies and bright stars of Texas He died in the Lord, and it was of such as he that John was told to write, "*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them*" ([Revelation 14:13](#)). He has gone home. After the turmoil and strife of "life's fitful fever" have ended, what more blessed and glorious thought than to know that one is "going home."

And here is Dallas. Ever so gently the huge ship touches the earth. Thus far the

journey has been safely accomplished. Only a few more miles now. And then, home. Is it possible that I am even closer to that heavenly home than to the familiar scenes of my own frame cottage? God knows. Any one of us may at any given moment be only one heart-beat from eternity — an eternal home with God, or banishment forever from his presence. There is something terrifying about that, and yet something infinitely thrilling. May God grant to all of us that when our eyes shall close in death we may take that sweetest of all journeys — the path that leads to home.

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Thanks to Julie Seeto

11-14-2002

WHY DON'T YOU STOP WONDERING WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD AND READ THE MANUAL

The Boy Who Didn't Come Back From Heaven

By Wayne Greeson

The Boy Who Came Back From Heaven came out in 2010 and sold more than 1 million copies and spent months on the New York Times' bestseller list. Kevin Malarkey and his six-year-old son Alex were driving home from church in Huntsville, Ohio, on a Sunday morning in November 2004, when they were in a traffic accident and Alex was severely injured. He suffered, what is called, an "internal decapitation", his skull separated from his spine. Alex's condition was so severe that the coroner was called to the scene of the crash.

The Boy Who Came Back From Heaven (TBWCB) listed Kevin and Alex as co-authors. It is about Alex's amazing recovery, but what drove its popularity and sales, was the claim that Alex had spent time in heaven after the accident and came back to tell about it.

In the book, Kevin and Alex claim that two months after the accident, when Alex came out of a coma, he was visited by angels and demons. Further, that he had traveled through a bright tunnel to be greeted by five angels, and then met Jesus, who told him he would live. He also claimed he saw 150 "pure, white angels with fantastic wings." Heaven is described as a place with lakes, rivers, and grass. Near to where God sits on His throne is a scroll describing the "End Times". He describes the devil has three heads, red eyes, moldy teeth, and hair of fire.

The popular success of this book was followed by other "heaven tourism" books, giving fantastical details about heaven, angels, and God. *Heaven Is for Real* is a

book that came out later as a movie based upon a 4-year-old's descriptions of his visit to heaven, which included supposedly seeing a rainbow horse and meeting the Virgin Mary.

Other heaven tourism books include *90 Minutes in Heaven* from a car accident, *Flight to Heaven* based upon a plane crash, *To Heaven and Back*, about a kayaking accident, and *Miracles From Heaven* following a fall into a hollow tree. Over 20 million books have been sold since 2005.

One writer described this “Folks have been going to heaven with amazing regularity lately. They look around-one even sat on Jesus’ lap-then come back to report on the trip. It’s a lucrative journey.” [“Publishing World Cashes in on Heavenly Journeys”, USA Today, January 11, 2013].

Heaven tourism did not just begin in the 2000s, nor the cashing in on such stories. People have been telling stories for centuries for profit about trips to heaven and visits by angels and the Lord.

In the 19th century, the founder of the Mormon church, Joseph Smith, claimed to be visited by many angels, many figures from Old and New Testament figures, and the Father, the Son, and Lucifer. The founder of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Ellen G. White, claimed she had visited heaven and was told by the Lord: “Ellen, I want you to paint a picture of heaven for My people.” Both of these self-described “prophets” profited from their tales by the followers and the money they collected.

In 2012, Alex Malarkey's mother, Beth, wrote a series of article admitting that her son's story was a hoax. In 2015, Alex wrote a letter to a conservative Christian blog to “Lifeway and other Sellers, Buyers and, Marketers of Heaven Tourism” in which he stated: “I did not die. I did not go to heaven. When I made the claims, I had never read the Bible. People have profited from lies, and continue to. They should read the Bible, which is enough.”

The book's publisher announced they would stop selling the book. Subsequently, Kevin filed a lawsuit against the publisher and claimed that his father “concocted” the story that Alex had gone to heaven.

In the Bible, there are but a handful of people who report seeing heaven. This includes the prophets: Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, and the apostles Paul and John. All had visions except perhaps the apostle Paul ([II Corinthians 12:2-3](#)).

None of the Bible accounts of heavenly visits are ascribed to near-death experiences. None of those who did come back from death in the Bible ever described their journey or profited from it by writing a book about it. (The widow's son, Elijah raised, [I Kings 17:17-24](#); Lazarus of Bethany, [John 11:1-46](#); Eutychus, raised by Paul, [Acts 20:9-12](#)).

Those Bible figures with visions of heaven give few details, they focus on the glory of the Lord on His throne and not on themselves. The apostle Paul even said it was not lawful for him to speak of his visit. ([II Corinthians 12:4](#)). Why would God for-

bid Paul from telling us what he saw in heaven, but tell many others in the last few years to give all these fantastic details and profit from their favored insight? While the apostle John's account of heaven contains the most details, absent are the silly, trivial and self-serving details found in so many recent accounts.

Some claim the modern storytellers' stories about visits to heaven are faith-building and encouraging. But John told us not to be gullible about the claims and teaching of every storyteller. *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world"* ([I John 4:1](#)).

The danger of these storytellers is, in their desire to profit from their stories, truth becomes a casualty and fiction becomes a commodity. Peter explained: *"But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you"* ([II Peter 2:1-3](#)).

The fictions in TBWCB show the dangers of false teachers making merchandise of believers by feigned words. The truth is, the boy didn't come back from heaven because he didn't go there, to begin with.

Other heaven tourism books do not need the admissions of falsity as TBWCB, for us to know they are just as untrue. Anyone who teaches on heaven, matters of faith and God must *"speak as the oracles of God"* ([I Peter 4:11](#)). *"If they do not speak according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them"* ([Isaiah 8:20](#)).

We are *"not to think (of men) beyond what is written"* ([I Corinthians 4:6](#)). Paul warned us: *"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed"* ([Galatians 1:8](#)).

I know heaven is real, not because of these storytellers, but because the Bible tells me so. Do not allow these heaven tourism storytellers to make merchandise of you.

