

BOOK ONE

Life

after

Death



What I Saw in Heaven

By Roberts Liardon

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DESTINY IMAGE® PUBLISHERS, INC.

P.O. Box 310, Shippensburg, PA 17257-0310

“Promoting Inspired Lives.”

ISBN 13: 978-0-7684-0443-2

For Worldwide Distribution

Printed in the U.S.A.

Previously published ISBN: 978-0-7684-2381-5

This book and all other Destiny Image, Revival Press, MercyPlace, Fresh Bread, Destiny Image Fiction, and Treasure House books are available at Christian bookstores and distributors worldwide.

For a U.S. bookstore nearest you, call 1-800-722-6774.

For more information on foreign distributors, call 717-532-3040.

Reach us on the Internet: www.destinyimage.com.

Parts of this book were previously published as *Visions of Heaven*, ISBN 978-0-7684-2381-5, copyright © 2013.

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Book I

Roberts Liardon

CHAPTER ONE

Visions Are for Today!

When I was eight years old, my life was, I think, fairly ordinary in most respects. Eight-year-old boys are not consumed with jobs or making a car payment or planning their retirement fund. Instead, their days revolve around school, their friends and pets, their favorite sports, and their families.

My own life was much the same, living in American's "heartland." I enjoyed meeting up with my friends to play sports. The summer I was eight, I remember rushing indoors from a baseball game and hurrying through my chores so that I could get back outside to more baseball! And yet, there are some aspects of my existence that were definitely far from average and certainly out of the ordinary.

When I was eight years old, I visited Heaven.

"Train Up a Child"

I was born February 14, 1966, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. My parents had moved there so that my mother could attend the charter class of 1965 at Oral Roberts University (ORU). I was born while she was attending ORU, and because I was the first baby boy born to a student, I was named Kenneth Roberts

Liardon.

ORU Founder and then-President Oral Roberts and his wife, Evelyn, wanted the privilege of helping name the first boy and the first girl who were born to students of what was at that time a new university. I have always been proud of my name because of its origin.

When I was between five and six years old, my father left us and divorced my mother, and I did not see him again for many years. My grandmother, an Assembly of God pastor, then came to live with us. She had pastored for many years alongside my grandfather. Together, they had started more than 20 churches, mainly country Pentecostal congregations, during their ministry together.

My grandfather had died when I was about one year old. After that, Grandmother came to Tulsa to help raise my sister, Priscilla, and me in order that my mother could finish school and still work to support us.

What I remember most about those childhood years was all the prayer and study of the Bible that occurred in our home. These things were a central part of our lives. We had more prayer at home than we did at church! I have often said that there was more spiritual activity— more healings, and more power and evidence of God—in our front room than at some churches.

I don't say these things to be critical or derogatory. These are simply the facts. I believe we saw healings and answers to prayer because there was so much awareness of God in our home.

Both my mother and my grandmother spent time with my sister and me, training us in the “*way we should go*” (see Prov. 22:6). Grandmother, however, was able to spend more time with Priscilla and me than our mother, who was working *and* finishing school. Even as a child, I knew that I was called to preach; and because Grandmother was a preacher, she naturally spent additional time with me.

Her “training” mainly involved prayer and reading God’s Word, the Bible. When we had family prayer, my sister and I were *not* allowed to just sit and listen; and we were certainly not allowed to watch television or color in coloring books when the adults prayed, either!

When it was time to pray, we had to kneel down just as they did. We came from a background where many people felt they weren’t really praying if they were not on their knees. Priscilla and I weren’t expected to pray the entire time our mother and grandmother prayed, because their prayer times were, on occasion, hours long.

We were, however, instructed to pray as much as we could. Our mother and grandmother understood the limits of our attention spans and physical stamina, and they encouraged us to pray to that point and then just beyond it to build our endurance in prayer. In that way, they trained us to be able to enter into a long period of prayer when we sensed God calling us to do that.

Naturally, we prayed in English, but we also prayed in tongues. The Bible mentions this as a heavenly prayer language, given by God to Christian believers. Most of the

time, we do not know exactly what we are praying when we pray in tongues, but the Holy Spirit of God prays through us just what is needed. The apostle Paul mentions the importance of praying in both our human language and in the “unknown” language of tongues in First Corinthians 14:15:

...what shall I do? I will do both. I will pray in unknown tongues and also in ordinary language that everyone understands (TLB).

We also read our Bibles daily at home. It was simply a part of our lifestyle. In some families, the children might be expected to make their beds, fold their own laundry, or care for the pets; in our family, Priscilla and I were expected to read four chapters of the Bible a day, so that we could read it through in a year. This was an assigned “chore,” in a sense, but it certainly was not a grinding, unpleasant burden to my sister and me. It was just what we did as a family—how we lived.

My family and I also memorized Scriptures at home as well as at Sunday school. In the mornings, as we ate breakfast or headed out the door to school, Mother or Grandmother—whoever was getting us off to school that day—would ask us what we were memorizing. Sometimes, my sister and I memorized three or four verses during a week.

In hearing me relate these experiences, or after reading about them in my books, some people have received the wrong impression about my upbringing.

A few have said, “Boy! You sure had a tough childhood!”

No, I didn’t have a “tough childhood.” We lived under a

kind of divine discipline that grew out of the love and compassion of my mother and grandmother—and the Spirit of the Lord. The spirit of rebellion that permeates the world never had a chance to take hold of us. Rebellion was simply not allowed in our home.

After my parents' divorce, even more prayer began to take place in our home. And, yes, there were some problems and hurts that I did have to work through because of the divorce. However, as I have talked to and read about many other children of broken homes, I realize that my sister and I came through quite well—and it was *because* of the prayer and emphasis of the Word as we grew up.

Often, God's Word working in our hearts broke feelings of rejection and self-pity that otherwise might have set up what the Bible calls "*strongholds*" (see 2 Cor. 10:4). These strongholds can gain a grip on a life that will cause untold suffering and destruction. Many mornings, as I boarded the school bus, I prayed under my breath or whispered verses of Scripture.

There were times, of course, when I was filled with sorrow that I did not have a dad with whom I could do the things that all boys like to do. Other children would ask me about my dad, which increased my sadness. I found myself wanting to cry, "Where is my dad? Where is he when I need him?"

And suddenly, I would remember my mother and grandmother teaching me, "You may not have a natural father living with you every day, but you do have a heavenly Father who is with you each day. He will be your Dad, if you let Him."

It was at one of those moments, remembering their words, that I had a revelation of a great truth. The seed they had planted inside me began to grow, and I knew beyond any doubt that knowing my heavenly Father was the most important reality in my life.

It was wonderful to have the kind of relationship with God that we had at home. It certainly affected how I acted at school! Because of the strong principles from God's Word that had been placed inside me by prayer, Bible reading, and my mother's and grandmother's teaching, I found I just couldn't use certain words or do some of the things other kids did. Especially during my teenage years, I was, in a sense, "out of step" with my peers; I realize now that it was they who were out of step—with God.

Mother and Grandmother taught me not to lie, or to steal, or to covet. The Ten Commandments really were our way of life. When other children made fun of us and we came home upset, we were told, "Truth outlives a life."

Priscilla and I were not unique in receiving some persecution for the way we lived. The problem of peer pressure exists for Christian teenagers in any situation or generation. We were able to handle it without bending or breaking because of the love and respect we had for our mother and grandmother—and for Jesus.

Respect for Adults

One of the most valuable abilities that was developed in my sister and me was to honor our elders, especially older men and women in the ministry. Today, when I see how many children are allowed to act disrespectfully toward their parents and other adults, I think of the story of the turtle and the hare. You probably heard this story as a child.

A turtle and a hare set out to run a race. The hare, symbolizing a lie, seems to be winning. Whereas, the turtle, representing the truth, looks as if he won't even finish. Everyone pays attention to the lie as it speeds on. But the hare is overconfident and decides to take a nap, thinking he has already won the race. Yet while he sleeps, the turtle overtakes him and crosses the finish line to win the race.

In the same way, in the past 15 years, when rumors have run rampant concerning nearly every well-known ministry and minister, I've thought of that principle. People may say this thing or that, but the truth really will "outlive a life."

Likewise, the truth of honoring one's elders, particularly those "elder statesmen" of the faith, will add to your knowledge and spiritual wisdom. There is much we can learn from those who have gone before us, just as I learned from my grandmother's long experience in the ministry.

I actually come from a long line of preachers; my grandmother learned from her ancestors and passed that knowledge along to me. For several generations, there have been ministers of the Gospel in my family. There were

Methodist circuit riders, preachers in various denominations, and my grandfather and grandmother, the first Pentecostal preachers in our family lineage.

The Bible Talks about Visions

Some of the questions that naturally come to mind when people hear of visions or going to Heaven are: “Is this for today?” “Do people really have visions?” “How can I know if these things are from God or not?”

We have an authority to which we can go concerning all spiritual activity—it is the Bible.

On the Day of Pentecost, 40 days after Jesus returned to Heaven following His resurrection from the dead, the apostle Peter quoted a prophecy given hundreds of years earlier by the prophet Joel. Peter said that this prophecy was now to be fulfilled. The “last days” referred to by Joel and Peter actually began on the Day of Pentecost, and continue to this day. In Acts 2:16-18, Peter proclaims:

...this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on My servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy” (NIV).

You can see in this Scripture passage several characteristics that the prophet Joel identified with the “last days”—days in which we are now living:

- God will pour His Spirit out on all *flesh*, meaning that every person will come into contact with God’s power in

some way, and then be faced with how they will handle it and respond to the person of Jesus.

- A surge of God's supernatural power will come on both men *and* women, young *and* old, and even on the very lowliest. This includes whether you have an education or not, whether you have certain natural gifts or not. God wants to show Himself mighty through *everyone*.
- People, even young ones, will see visions, have supernatural dreams, and prophesy.

Not only does the Bible promise that people will see visions, but it is filled with the testimonies of those who have had visions themselves. In Isaiah 6:1, the prophet Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. The prophets Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, who spoke God's Word to His exiled children, each had several visions. In Second Kings 2:11, Elisha literally saw the older prophet Elijah taken up bodily into Heaven by a chariot of fire.

The apostle John, while he was in exile upon the Island of Patmos, saw a number of spiritual visions, which have been recorded for us in the Book of Revelation. In Acts 10:9-16, the apostle Peter fell into a trance and had a vision of clean and unclean beasts. This vision came to him three times, and the Lord gave him the interpretation of it— both the Jews (the "*clean*") and the Gentiles (the "*unclean*") were included in God's plan of salvation through His Son.

I believe that as time moves toward the return of Jesus, we'll see more and more dreams, visions, and other works of the Holy Spirit. It will become even more important to know

God's Word concerning these supernatural manifestations as well as have the discernment by the Holy Spirit as to what is truly of God. The Bible speaks of the devil or satan, who always tries to produce a counterfeit of what God does. When he sees the Holy Spirit moving in a certain way, he comes up with a similar move. Much of what is called "New Age" is nothing more than satan's imitation of God's signs, wonders, and miracles.

There are four types of visions—five actually, if you count what could be called a "false" vision.¹ The first type is referred to as an *open* vision. During this vision, a person's human senses are not suspended, but rather they see directly into the supernatural world. God has literally opened their eyes and ears to the world of the spirit.

An example of this is found in Revelation 4:1-2, where John has his vision on the Island of Patmos:

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." At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it (NIV).

Different from the open vision is the trance vision. In this type of vision, the human senses are suspended, but the person does see into the supernatural world. The apostle Peter experienced this when he had a vision when praying on a roof, in Acts 10:9-10:

About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance (NIV).

Peter then saw Heaven opened up and what appeared to be a large sheet lowered to earth, filled with all kinds of animals, reptiles, and birds. He heard a voice tell him to eat what was in there. Peter, an observant Jew, replied that he had never eaten anything impure or unclean. The voice told him never to call impure what God has made clean. This trance vision was repeated two more times. Ultimately, Peter realized that salvation through Jesus Christ was not merely for the Jews (who could be considered “clean” before God because of their covenant with Him), but it was also for the Gentiles, who had always been considered “unclean.”

A third type of vision is the *inward* vision. This vision is often compared to a dream. The person experiencing it does not see into the supernatural world, but receives revelation within himself, in his mind. In Daniel 2:28, the prophet Daniel refers to this as he replies to King Nebuchadnezzar about the king’s disturbing dream:

...there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these (NIV).

A final type of vision is frequently referred to as a *night*

vision or *dream*. This is mentioned in the story of Mary and Joseph in Matthew 1:20. Joseph had been pledged to Mary, but she was now to have a child. Consequently, Joseph planned to separate from her privately to share her disgrace, when,

After he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit” (NIV).

These night visions are not just human dreams; they are sent from God and have a supernatural component to them. They don't deal with simple earthly events or human desires, but with God's great plans that He wishes to reveal. Indeed, visions, dreams, and signs that are *from God* always point to Jesus and what He did to redeem mankind. They make His name great rather than lifting up a person. They never offer a *different* path to God, but rather direct men to Jesus, whom John 14:6 tells us is “*the way, the truth, and the life.*” They are filled with what is pure, good, true, and holy; furthermore, they never instruct us to violate the commandments and laws of God.

As I have traveled around the world in the past two decades and studied Church history, it has become apparent to me that more and more Christians are experiencing the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. Many believers tell of dreams and visions about Heaven or hell in books and publications such as *Guidepost* magazine and the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International's monthly publication, *Voice*.

Some men of our day report having had more than one vision.²

God's Word goes into detail concerning visions and supernatural dreams, making it clear that they are for today; the testimony of many bears this out. Men and women, throughout history and into the present, have received visions from God, and there are more to come. Yet, there is no way you can *earn* a vision or have one simply because you choose to have it. I know that nearly every Christian would like to see Jesus or have a preview of Heaven. There seems to be no set criteria for these experiences except the sovereign will of God. He alone determines who will have them.

Much so-called "New Age" teaching, I have noticed, seems to emphasize the power of our own choice in having visions, dreams, and supernatural experiences whenever we want, "on demand." This, however, is wrong; it is not up to us to decide to have a *supernatural experience* whenever we want. If we try to make something happen, we may experience something supernatural, but it will not be from God. It comes from satan to deceive. Only God decides when and if we will have visions and dreams—we don't.

My primary belief remains that God's will alone is involved in selecting people for these experiences. I also know it's not because He favors those selected, but I believe their visions, dreams, and experiences are meant to help further God's plan on earth in some particular way. Ultimately, I feel He does these things to establish His will and His Kingdom on earth, rather than merely for our benefit or enjoyment. He sends visions for His purposes, by His will.

Although I had this vision of Heaven at age eight, I didn't share it with people until my late teens. The Lord began to speak to me while I was in high school and said that I was to begin telling what He had shown and told me when I was little. He said, "I want you to put this into a book, and I will cause it to go around the earth. It will win more souls than you will in person in your life and ministry."

And I have done exactly that. I have written this story, and when God impresses it upon me, I retell it for the purpose of winning people to Christ. I am also able to comfort those who have lost a family member or a Christian close to them, with the reality of Heaven.

As of this writing, there are more than one million copies of the story of my visit to Heaven in print in many languages.

CHAPTER TWO

A Visit to Heaven

I was eight years old that summer of 1974 when I came indoors one day around noon. I had been playing a game of baseball outside with my friends, but now it was time to read my four chapters of the Bible. (I knew I'd be quizzed later on it.) As I have said, reading the Bible was simply a part of our family life—a part that I wasn't allowed to ignore. That day's reading was in the Gospel of John. My goal was to quickly finish my reading so I could return outside to the baseball game; I certainly wasn't looking for any deep revelation!

I sat down on the side of my bed and then laid my head back on the pillow, with my *Children's Living Bible* propped up on my chest so I could read it. *Suddenly—without any warning—the bed, my room, and even my body disappeared!*

As this happened, the first thing I felt was an energy or presence, which I now know was the anointing and presence of God. Of course, as an eight year old, I wasn't able to identify it that way. I felt myself being pulled through the roof of my house at a high rate of speed. As I moved over the earth, I began to see the oceans as if from a distance, and moving farther through space, I saw the lights in the heavens.

I did not realize it at the time, but what I was experiencing is

mentioned in the Bible. The apostle Paul mentions being “*caught up to the third heaven*” in Second Corinthians 12:2. Today, most Bible scholars agree that the earth’s natural atmosphere is the first heaven, and the second heaven is that unseen realm of the spirit—just as real as the natural world, but invisible unless God opens our eyes to it. It is considered to be the place where satan and his demons have lived since being cast out of the third Heaven.

The third Heaven is where God dwells, and due to my experience there, I refer to it as a “planet” called Heaven. It produces the feeling of a geographical location, a definite place at the top of the universe, from which all else proceeds. Scientists tell us that the universe is continuing to expand outwardly, and that seems to fit with what I have seen and experienced.

Of course, as an eight-year-old boy, I didn’t perceive it quite that way. And I now tell this experience from the perspective of the eight-year-old I was then. As an adult, I have questions today that didn’t even enter my mind at that time, and I have a different understanding of what I saw. At the age of eight, however, I simply accepted the experience without analyzing it a great deal.

One of the Gates

That afternoon, all I knew was that I was flying through the heavens at an incredible rate of speed. In a matter of a few moments, I landed on a flat space no larger than the average living room floor, outside an enormous gate, the biggest I had ever seen—or have ever seen since. It was very tall and wide and bore no cut or blemish. In fact, it was made of one solid pearl, immense, glossy, and glowing white. The edges of the gate were carved with a design. And it had a presence to it—its own glow and its own life.

I remember as a little boy looking at this gate and trying to figure out what in the world had happened! I shook myself to see if I was dreaming because it all had happened so fast. I then realized the gate was real when I reached out my hand and touched it. As I did so, I heard these words: “This is one of the gates.”

I turned around to see who had spoken to me, and *there stood Jesus Christ*. All the glory that was about Him began to move toward me, and it came upon me. I recognized Him immediately, although He did not look like any of the pictures I had ever seen painted of Him. This much I can say: When you are faced with the presence of Jesus, you have no doubt who He is.

I Beheld Him

Since that moment when I came face to face with Him, people have asked me repeatedly what He looks like. This is harder to answer than it might seem. In my experience, those who have seen Him are so overwhelmed by His presence that His appearance is secondary. You become so caught up in *who* He is that your mind doesn't fully retain the details of what He looks like.

But I remember that He appeared to me to be somewhere around 5'11" to 6'1" tall and muscular—the perfect man. I saw no scars or signs of His crucifixion. They may have been there, but I did not see them. The way He looked, talked, and moved seemed the epitome of perfection and wholeness. He is God, and I sensed that. His skin was olive-toned, and He had a beard. His hair came almost to His shoulders and appeared to be sandy-brown.

Over the years, people have come to me and said, “But His hair is dark!” Perhaps they think of Him that way due to medieval and Byzantine paintings in which His hair is often black or because He was a Jew. They may be right. Perhaps His hair looked lighter to me because of the light of His presence or His glory that surrounded Him. I can only relate it the way I saw it at the time, and it is still as clear to me as if I had seen Him today.

Furthermore, the only place the New Testament describes details of His appearance is in Revelation 1:14, where the apostle John saw His hair, “*white like wool, as white as*

snow.” The Bible is fairly silent, for good reason I believe, about His physical appearance. What He “looks” like is not the central issue; knowing Him and experiencing the reality of His presence is. I believe the Lord did not want us to become so caught up in His physical appearance that we would miss the spiritual reality of knowing Him personally. In the same way that we know that we are far more than our height, or hair or skin color, or the shape of our features, so He is far more than His appearance!

And the glory of that presence engulfed me. I buckled to my knees, and tears began to stream from my eyes, running down my face. I could not have stopped them if I had tried. They were not provoked by any human emotion such as sadness or excitement, but by His very presence. When He spoke to me, it was as if arrows of faith propelled by love shot into me and exploded inside. My only reaction was to weep.

Then He spoke again, “I want to give you a tour through Heaven, this place I have made for all who believe, because *I love you so much.*”

And He does not love me anymore than He does you!

Acts 10:34 reveals that God is not a respecter of persons; the measure that He loves one is the same measure with which He loves all. As He said this to me, tears began to pour down my face again. His presence is so tender that your joy cannot express itself in any other way.

Then Jesus said, “Now, no more tears, but a face full of joy would make me glad.” And then He laughed, and I did, too.

He came over to me, picked me up, and dried my face. There are no human words to adequately describe either Jesus or Heaven. The people who have seen Him or who have been to Heaven can express only what they have seen in terms of what they know on earth, and that is a poor picture indeed compared to the real thing.

Life in Heaven

Jesus escorted me through that huge gate. He didn't ask anyone to open it, and He pushed no button; it simply opened up and we walked through to the inside of Heaven.

As I entered Heaven, the first thing I saw was a street, and it was made of gold. As I continued to walk through Heaven, I saw that all the streets looked as if they were literally made of pure gold. Even the curbs were made of gold. In some places the streets looked just like the gold we have on earth, which is how I recognized what it was. Yet, in other parts, the streets were transparent, and the gold looked as clear as crystal.

I thought to myself, If this is Heaven, then these are gold streets I'm standing on. And with that, I raced for the curb.

From a distance, I saw that Jesus had continued to walk ahead. He then turned to say something to me, but I had moved. Looking over at me, He inquired, "What are you doing over there?"

I stood on the grass alongside the curb with both my eyes and my mouth wide open in surprise. I answered Him with two words: "Golden streets!" At that, Jesus laughed and laughed. He has a wonderful laugh that comes from deep within, similar to what we call a "belly laugh." I thought He would never stop. Then He said, "Come over here."

I replied, "No. Those streets are gold. I can't walk on them!" The only gold I had ever seen was in rings on people's fingers, which I knew was valuable and very expensive. But

Jesus beckoned me. “Come on,” He said and kept laughing as He walked over to where I was and led me back onto the street. I would come to realize that the way we look at wood here on earth is the way Heaven looks at gold— useful and beautiful, but nothing out of the ordinary nor impossible to possess.

“These streets were made for those who have accepted Me into their hearts. They are made for My younger brothers and sisters. You are one of My younger brothers, so enjoy them.” Jesus spoke to me on my eight-year-old level.

Along the curbs, the grass was a green that I cannot express, except to say it was the original essence and very fullness of that color. In fact, all the colors there were of such a nature that the colors here on earth seem faded in comparison to the vibrancy of Heaven. The curbs were also lined with flowers in all the colors of the rainbow, and they hummed.

No, they weren't little Walt Disney flowers with tiny faces humming little songs! A “hum” emanated from them as they vibrated and surged with the life of God that fills Heaven. While I was looking at them, I noticed a woman coming down the street, and she practically bounced as she went along. This is because the atmosphere in Heaven has no resistance in it. There's “no sweat” to our existence in Heaven. The closest thing that people here on earth can come to this experience is in the spirit of prayer in the spiritual realm, where they get to a place that is carefree, where the pressures of life neither control nor dominate them. There is no devil and no temptation there but a light, free, and joyful atmosphere. I found no sense of hurry in Heaven.

As we walked along, I became aware that the atmosphere of Heaven is wonderful because the fruit of the Holy Spirit energizes it. The very breezes are filled with the presence of God. Often on earth, in the supernatural presence of the Holy Spirit, there is a feeling of inner warmth, of being wrapped in a blanket of God's love. That is the way Heaven felt, only more so.

Jesus and I passed towns, buildings, and little offices. These buildings were used for whatever "business" or interaction that takes place in Heaven. I saw people coming and going, and they all were smiling. Some sang songs I recognized from earth, while others sang heavenly songs I had never heard. Many carried little bundles, and some carried books.

While I don't believe there is an exchange of money in Heaven, there were people going in and out of those buildings to acquire things. I saw a woman walk into one place with a bundle of some type of goods and later walk out with a book.

There are books in Heaven! In Revelation 21:27, the Bible mentions the Lamb's book of life, and there are others, too. There are books and songs in Heaven that are intended for our knowledge and enjoyment in praising God on earth, while others are designed to give not just academic knowledge, but an understanding of the times and seasons of God's plan on earth so people may cooperate with His present-day workings. These books are intended to motivate mankind and bring an impartation of God's very life to those on earth.

There is, however, a price to be paid to bring these books

and songs from Heaven to earth for the benefit of the Body of Christ. It is the price of walking in the Spirit—being led by God's Spirit rather than submitting to those desires of ours that oppose Him. You pay this price by spending much time in prayer and loving God's Word more than earthly pleasures, knowledge, and entertainment. The men and women who would bring these books and songs from Heaven must be able to resist both the flattering popularity that might come and the rejection by those who won't understand.

Mansions Prepared for Us

As we walked on through this section of Heaven, which was really like a small town, I saw street signs. We came to one street, the name of which I cannot remember, and we turned right.

We walked up what looked like an unpaved dirt path. Being a small boy, I did what small boys everywhere enjoy doing—I tried to kick up the dirt and make little dust clouds as I walked along. But the path stayed where it belonged! (Whenever I tell this part, the women in the congregation always applaud—they won't have to dust their furniture in Heaven!)

As we continued up the path, I saw a gigantic house above the trees. Even now, as a grown man remembering that house, I know it was a mansion, and that it didn't simply look that way because I was a little boy. While I was in Heaven, I saw different kinds of mansions or homes. They all are not the same size, but each seems to fit the desires of the ones who live in them; each one has some of the features that the person who dwells there likes. It is as if there are touches both of Heaven and of earth in them.

Jesus talked to me the entire time we walked up the path toward the house. You see, Jesus is a person. You can talk to Him about everyday issues, and He'll answer you on your level and according to your understanding, just as He did with me that day in Heaven. He is not only a member of the Godhead who rules and reigns, but He is our *friend*, too. And you don't have to make a visit to Heaven to talk to Him, either! He is here

with us on earth, and He has told us in Hebrews 13:5 that He will *never* leave us nor forsake us.

It's important for us to remember that the members of the Trinity— God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit— have emotions. Likewise, we have emotions because we were created in God's image. However, unlike us, the members of the Godhead aren't "ruled" by their emotions. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit always do what is right regardless of emotion. In the same way, while we have emotions to enjoy and to give depth and a unique flavor to our personalities, we need to rule over our own emotions and not allow them to dominate our lives and decisions.

The love of Jesus permeated everything He said and did with me during my visit. I will never forget the revelations I received of what love really is. When we arrived at the door of this mansion, Jesus walked up and knocked on it—a part of His love, being considerate of other people's feelings, time, and privacy. And all the people I met in Heaven were polite.

Jesus and I waited for what seemed like a period of about three minutes, and then He knocked again. Finally, a man opened the door, leaned his head out, and spoke to us. I did not see anyone "floating" through the walls. In fact, the entire time I was in Heaven, I saw no one float anywhere at all. Everyone walked just as we do here on earth!

The man addressed us and said, "How are *You* doing, Jesus? And how are you doing, Roberts?" I almost took off running! That man knew my name, and then pronounced it correctly, with the "s" on the end!

I remember thinking, *How does he know my name? No one but Jesus knows my name up here.* However, to my surprise, I found that everyone who spoke with us knew my name and also knew that I was a visitor. In addition, the conversations were just as they are on earth— people asked questions, answered them, and carried on discussions.

I looked up at the man in shock, but answered him courteously as I had been taught, “Well, I’m doing okay!” He then invited us inside; Jesus and I walked in and sat down in what I would call a living room or den area. The furniture there is different from that on earth in one very important respect—it is as if comfort “lives” in the furniture of Heaven. Earthly furniture becomes uncomfortable after you sit on it for a while, and you find yourself squirming and shifting periodically. In Heaven, comfort finds you. I sat down on a black velvet couch, and comfort reached up and “cuddled” me. I was so comfortable I never had to move once.

The man spoke with Jesus about what we would call revival. I realized that the inhabitants of Heaven have knowledge of events here on earth—not so much political events as what is going on spiritually, such as the movements of God, of the enemy, and of human beings. The man also talked about his family on earth and his concerns for them, again confirming to me that in Heaven people understand what is happening in their physical and spiritual families’ lives on earth. If you have family members who have gone to Heaven, they are aware of what is happening in your life and how you are doing.

After we finished talking, the man took us through the

house. It can be described only as total perfection. The windows had curtains over them. The walls were decorated with paintings that reminded me of earth's modern art, except they were better.

I saw photographs of the man's family members, and there were plants everywhere. In addition, the mansion was filled with beautiful furniture and luxuries. There were some things, however, that I did not recognize.

Each mansion was suited to the person who lived there, for every child of God has his or her own mansion in Heaven, according to John 14:2. I had the impression that to some degree, your mansion or home there contains what you like and enjoy. This particular one had different rooms, such as the dining room, living room, kitchen, den, and so forth. I'm sure that there were bedrooms, but I did not go upstairs.

The man gave me a large fruit to eat that looked somewhat like an apple, and it was delicious. Afterward, we said good-bye and left through the back door. I cannot begin to tell you why we left that way instead of the front door, but that is the way we went out. There were other people in the house, and they hugged and kissed both of us before we left.

I realize that the idea of eating in Heaven is something many people have a problem believing. The Bible, however, mentions the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19:9; and in Revelation 22:2, John writes of the tree of life that is in Heaven, bearing 12 kinds of fruit. In addition, John 21:9-14 tells us that Jesus ate fish and bread with the disciples after He was resurrected and had a transfigured body—the kind we will

have in Heaven.

Every person I saw looked to be in perfect condition and in the prime of life. They all appeared as if they were in their 30s. Perhaps this is because the Bible says we shall be like Him, and that was His age when He was resurrected and taken back to Heaven. All the people I saw were friendly and very comfortable with Jesus. They were reverent toward Him, but interacted frequently and easily with Him. You will find that you are perfectly comfortable around Jesus. He is the easiest person to whom you can relate!

The people in Heaven wore white robes, which was the most important item of their dress; it represents the right standing with God that Jesus paid for with His blood. These robes seemed to radiate from within. Some wore different colored sashes, and still others were adorned with jewelry. No one wore crowns, however; I believe that occurrence is still to come.

Children in Heaven

While I was in Heaven, I saw no children. Yet somehow I knew there were children there; they were in another part, which I did not see. I saw only a portion of Heaven, not all of it. Others, however, who have seen or visited Heaven have observed children there.

Earlier in this century, Rebecca Springer lay very ill, near death in Canada. She had a vision of Heaven and saw her niece, Mae, there. As she and Mae walked through Heaven together, they saw little children and adults floating and swimming upon a lake that was as smooth as glass. Later in the vision, she saw a young girl she had known on earth, Mary Bates, who told Rebecca how much she wished her own heartbroken mother could see her there in Heaven and be comforted. Mary's desire was that her mother would understand that her daughter was not lost to her, but would be waiting for her when she, too, joined God's saints, that is, believers in Christ.

Perhaps the most moving part of Rebecca's vision was seeing Jesus sitting beneath a flowering tree on the shore of the lake, surrounded by a dozen children of all ages. Some sat at His feet or leaned upon His knees and His shoulders. One tiny girl sat upon His lap, her hands filled with flowers, as Jesus talked with them. Their faces shone with ecstasy as He told them a story and asked them questions. Rebecca's vision confirms that Jesus has a special, tender love for those little ones of His in Heaven.³

In 1988, evangelist Jesse Duplantis was taken up into Heaven. While he was there, he saw a multitude of small children, singing and praising God as they played little harps. When he asked the angel who had brought him there who they were, he was told they were the children the earth did not want. As Duplantis watched these children, who appeared to be from three to ten years old, he realized that they were children who had been lost to abortion. The angel explained to him that these children longed to see their mothers come to Heaven and be reunited with them.⁴

The children continued to play their beautiful music when Jesus appeared to them. His hands reached out to them as they played their harps and sang praises to Him. They hugged Him and looked up at Him in adoration. He responded by saying, *“Suffer the little children to come unto me...for of such is the kingdom of God”* (Mark 10:14b).

Norvel Hayes, a successful Christian businessman from Tennessee, also received a vision from the Lord that concerned children in Heaven. In this vision, which he experienced almost 30 years ago, he saw a large, gray, mansion-like building. The Lord permitted him to go into the many rooms there, and he saw furniture designed just for little children—little chairs and tables and such. It was as if the entire mansion had been prepared as a home for children. As he walked outside the building, he saw beautiful flowers filled with the life of God and brilliant green grass. The presence of God in the air was so strong; every time he breathed, he experienced a divine sensation of goodness and beauty.

After his vision, he told everyone he met who had lost a

young child to sickness or to an accident, “If you could see where your child lives today, you would never wish for him or her to come back! God has made a special place in Heaven just for children.”

Fourteen years later in Florida, as his driver pulled out on the highway to go to the Gainesville airport, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Norvel Hayes so strongly that he had to hold on to the door. As he wept in God’s presence, everything earthly disappeared, and God gave him another vision. He saw little children all around him, trying to reach him, holding up their hands. These children were needy, crying, “Help me!” And the vision ended.

About a month later, while attending a camp meeting in Springfield, Missouri, a message was given in tongues at the end of the service, and the interpretation of it was meant personally for Norvel Hayes. God reminded him that He had not forgotten about the little children.

“I am going to require you to get a building for Me, to help save little children.” Hayes bought a repossessed mansion-like building with seven bathrooms and twelve bedrooms, which became a home for unwed mothers. An untold number of children have been saved through this ministry, born out of that vision. His vision of Heaven has brought comfort to parents who have aborted children or lost them at a young age, and it has also given birth to a ministry devoted to helping children here on earth.

While there are adults and children in Heaven, I found that each person’s age is reckoned according to his or her spiritual

maturity, not their physical maturity on earth. When you get to Heaven, your age will be what you are spiritually in the hidden man of the heart.

Animals in Heaven

Jesus and I continued walking, and as we crossed some hills, I noticed other things. I saw all kinds of animals, every kind you can think of, from A to Z. Often, people have questioned the subject of animals in Heaven, but if you think about it, why should there not be animals in Heaven? The Bible talks about horses in Heaven—and why would God have only one kind of animal? The most well-known reference, of course, is regarding Jesus returning to earth on a white horse, found in Revelation 19:11. When the prophet Elijah was taken up into Heaven, a fiery horse and chariot were sent down after him.

While I was in Heaven, I saw a dog, a baby goat, and a lion of great strength. There were birds singing in the trees, all sizes of birds, and they seemed to be singing the same song. And I could understand what they were singing—there was no “communication gap.” When they stopped singing, it seemed as if they began to talk among themselves.

I receive letters from people, asking if their pets will be in Heaven? I don't know the answer to that. You'll have to wait and see. I will say this—if everyone's dog, cat, parakeet, ferret, hamster, and gerbil show up, we're going to have a *lot* of animals in Heaven!

There were other animals I saw at a distance, but I could not identify them. They neither ran from people nor tried to attack them. All were calm and peaceful, because *fear cannot be found in Heaven*. God's presence is so strong that there is no confusion, doubt, sickness, or worry there.

I noticed the trees as we passed. The leaves swayed back and forth, dancing and praising. You would have thought a great wind was blowing through the land. The grass was very soft and yet after we passed over it, the blades sprang back into perfect alignment, immediately erasing any footprints.

I think many men will be happy to know that you never have to mow the lawn in Heaven! The grass is always the same length. After a leaf falls from a tree, it disappears. There is never any rotten fruit on a tree because death and decay cannot exist in Heaven. There is not one thing wrong there and not one problem to be found.

Of course, no death is found there, because the source of life is there. The goodness of God abounds in Heaven.

CHAPTER THREE

Multitudes of Angels

Jesus and I became friends as He continued to take me on a tour of Heaven. I was very comfortable with Him and not a bit nervous about what I said or did. When I looked down at myself, I discovered that I was dressed just as all the other people we met. All the saints whom I saw were dressed in white robes.

But it was not only people I saw in Heaven; it was also filled with angels. Sometimes paintings and other artwork give us a misleading impression of angels, that they are chubby, smiling, naked babies floating through the air playing harps. They are not like that at all! The angels I saw in Heaven were tall and strong; they appeared to be from six to eight feet tall and were dressed according to their position.

Some angels I saw did not have wings—but others did. When those wings moved, a musical sound was created, the like of which we have been unable to duplicate on earth. Many times, I have met older people in Christian circles who say they have heard angels sing—it may have been the sound of those wings moving, creating the melody of Heaven. When I stood on the streets of Heaven talking to people, angels would walk up to us, their wings would move, and I would hear the sound.

I noticed that angels acted differently in Jesus' presence than people did. Where people were reverent, but talkative and friendly with Jesus, the angels were almost silent, respectful, and reserved in His presence. I believe this is due to the fundamental difference between angels and humans.

Not all angels are the same; the Bible classifies them into several groups. Among these are the cherubim, the seraphim, the archangel, and the common angel. There are also warrior angels and messenger angels and probably many kinds not mentioned in Scripture.

Cherubim are described particularly in the Book of the prophet Ezekiel. Although often portrayed in popular art as fat, romantic babies shooting arrows of "love" at people, their reality is far different. They are often not classed as angels, but as a different order of being. They protected the Garden of Eden with flaming swords after Adam and Eve had been put out of Eden to live on the earth.

Among other characteristics, the cherubim (plural of "cherub") each have four faces and four wings with feet like those of calves. They do not "turn" as they move, but go straight forward. One of their faces is that of a man in front, one like that of a lion on the right side, another like that of an ox on the left side, and the remaining one is like the face of an eagle in back. Two of their wings are joined to each other and the other two cover their body.

Cherubim have an appearance similar to that of burning coals of fire, from which lightning goes forth. They have four hands, in appearance like that of a man. As they moved, Ezekiel

heard the noise of a great rushing.

The main function of cherubim in Scripture is that of covering or protecting. Nowhere is this more evident than in Ezekiel 41:18-21, where there are carvings of cherubim placed all around the temple as a sign of being covered with God's protection. In the same way, in Exodus 37:7-9, Moses had been told to make golden replicas of cherubim to shadow or cover the ark of the covenant.

The seraphim are described in Isaiah chapter 6 as having six wings; two cover their faces, two cover their feet, and they fly with the other two. In verse 3, the seraphim stand above the throne of God and cry out to each other, "*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory!*" Their purpose is to recognize and proclaim His holiness and His majesty.

In Isaiah 6:1-7, the prophet has a vision of the Lord on His throne, with the seraphim flying about Him, calling out to each other of His holiness. As Isaiah is confronted with his own sinfulness and cries out to God, it is the seraphim that fly to him, bringing a live coal from the altar, and laying it upon his mouth to purge his sin.

At the top of the angelic hierarchy are the chief angels, known as archangels. These angels rule over entire kingdoms. The Bible names three of them: Michael, the prince of Israel, mentioned in Daniel 10:13,21; Gabriel who stands before God and announced the birth of Jesus to His mother, Mary, in Luke 1:26-38; and lucifer, or "light-bearer," the angel who mounted a rebellion against God and was cast down from Heaven with

one third of the angels.

Lucifer—The Fallen Angel

Ezekiel 28:14-17 gives us a detailed picture of this prince of angels who was the ruler of earth before his fall:

You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings (NIV).

It is apparent that lucifer—or satan, as he is now known—had a position of great authority, was tremendously beautiful, and yet sinned against God. Isaiah 14:12-15 sheds more light on his fall:

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred

mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit (NIV).

Lucifer had decided to rule Heaven in God’s place and make himself like God. However, God threw him out of Heaven into the lowest depths! This is an event that has fascinated men throughout the millennia. The Puritan poet, John Milton, in his epic work, *Paradise Lost*, describes God casting lucifer from Heaven, declaring, “Him the Almighty Power hurl’d headlong flaming from th’ Ethereal sky with hideous ruin and combustion down to bottomless perdition.”⁵ Banished forever from Heaven, lucifer, or satan, has become the false “ruler” of earth. Jesus stripped Him of his powers at the cross; all he has left is the power of deception. It is he who deceives people about spiritual reality and tries to impersonate the Holy Spirit and the angels of God. The Bible now refers to him as an angel of light, who appears to radiate with the light of God’s revelation, but who is actually false and deceiving.

How can we know which angels are from God? What are the characteristics of divine angels, as opposed to demon spirits?

First, angels are sent from Almighty God. They bring messages of healing and deliverance. They do not speak for themselves, but are always under the authority of God. They are perfectly holy, and they always obey the Word of God. Their entire behavior agrees with the commandments and principles of Scripture.

Angels will never force themselves and their ministry upon you— but demons will. An angel may come with healing power, but you will have to choose to open the door of your heart to it.

In the past ten years, angels have become a popular subject of books, television programs, and even movies. Unfortunately, much of the “information” we find there is simply not true. Humans can never become angels when they die. Angels and men are two separate orders of being. Humans don’t become angels, and angels can never turn into humans! And despite the Christmas favorite, *It’s a Wonderful Life*, no angel can “earn his wings”! Nothing in Heaven is earned by personal effort—good or bad.

A more recent movie showed one of the archangels—a chief angel of God—coming to earth, where he proceeded to smoke, curse, drink, and chase women. No angel would ever dream of behaving this way, much less doing it and joking about it! In yet another film concerning angels, these ominous beings were dressed in gloomy black, and one finally decided to leave Heaven forever in order to live on earth and engage in a sexual relationship with a woman. Although it was portrayed as a tender love story of sacrifice for another, it is false when it comes to the real character, nature, and behavior of angels.

Many books encourage readers to regularly talk to and have experiences with their own personal angel. While it is true that angels are messengers from God and that we can speak to them, they can never take that first-place position in our lives that belongs only to the Lord Jesus. It cannot be stated too clearly that some of this so-called communication with angels

is nothing more than *contact with demon spirits*. We cannot force angels to appear to us or communicate with us—that, too, is left up to the sovereign will of God.

Our Guardian Angels

It is true, however, that each of us is assigned an angel to be our guardian. Every one of us has at least one, and during different seasons and circumstances in our lives, more may be assigned by God to us. Matthew 18:10 reveals:

Watch that you don't treat a single one of these child-like believers arrogantly. You realize, don't you, that their personal angels are constantly in touch with my Father in heaven? (MSG)

Dr. Roy Hicks, in his book *Guardian Angels: How to Activate Their Ministry in Your Life*,⁶ recounts a story of a missionary in Panama. This particular missionary had joined with another to travel far back into a country, where the good news of Jesus Christ had not been proclaimed. They knew there would possibly be severe persecution. These two did, however, have a certain amount of success in their outreach and were able to start a church from the meeting they had held.

Returning the next year to encourage the fledgling congregation, the missionaries met a recent convert who indicated a house in the distance, asking if they remembered that they had slept there the year before. When the missionaries responded that they did indeed remember, the new believer explained that at the time, he and others had planned to kill the two while they slept. They were prevented from doing this, he went on to say, by the presence of *two extremely large men guarding the house*.

The two missionaries thanked God for the guardian angels

He had sent to protect them!

We often think of guardian angels as protecting little children— and they do; but there is also a guardian angel for every believer. The “little ones” mentioned in Matthew 18 are not only young children, but also Christians of all ages, who are God’s children, *His* “little ones.”

A Song They Cannot Sing

The angels of God are awe-inspiring beings who bring messages of deliverance to mankind, provide divine protection, and continually proclaim the glory and worthiness of the Godhead. Yet, as wonderful as they are, they do not compare with the love, tenderness, and majesty of Jesus. And, you and I—and all believers here on earth or in Heaven—have one thing even the angels do not have: We have salvation purchased for us by Jesus' death on the cross.

There is an old hymn that tells us that “we sing a song the angels cannot sing.” That song is the song of redemption. The angels will never sing it because they cannot be born again. Salvation was made for man; only humans can know His redemption, bought with the blood of Jesus. And unlike the angels, we were not made only to be God's *servants*. All of mankind has been created for the position of greatest dignity as the sons of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER FOUR

Lord, Savior—and Friend

As Jesus and I walked on, I soon saw a huge building resembling a convention center here on earth. Thousands of people, the saints of God, were streaming inside. The building itself had a glowing circle around it. Two angels met Jesus and me and escorted us down to the second row where two seats were reserved. People greeted us on the way to our seats, and there was not a sad face in the entire place.

You would have thought we were at a family reunion where people had not seen one another in years. They began to hug and kiss each other, saying, “How are you? Glory to God!” It seemed as if they were permeated with an attitude of love—they loved everyone! They didn’t care what you looked like or where you were from. They just loved you, and everything they did was motivated by that love.

As soon as we were seated, a holy hush swept over the entire auditorium. I could have heard a pin drop. From the right of the stage, a choir of five to six hundred “praisers” entered, smiling as they walked on stage. These were people, not angels, and they were dressed similarly to a church choir on earth. They wore robes, and everything about their appearance was perfect. Suddenly, they began to sing and from that hushed quiet, those assembled *erupted* into singing and

praise. They lost all resemblance to a formal choir from that point!

Their hands went up, their voices lifted in praise songs, and they began to dance. Our praise services on earth could not compare. The congregation joined in, every person singing with all their hearts. They were not ashamed to praise God, either. Everyone in the building lifted their hands, praised God, and leaped up and down in dance. The service seemed to last for about two hours.

No individual led the worship, but everyone moved in unison. In spite of the singing and dancing, everything was done in perfect order—everything. There was no “dead space” or silence. The praise never died down, but instead grew in power and momentum. When I looked over at Jesus, He was smiling broadly and obviously enjoying the service. Then, all of a sudden, the praise ended abruptly, instead of diminishing gradually.

Here on earth, we often let our time of praise die down too soon. We neglect to continue because we have not learned the sacrifice of praise and worship. To really praise God, we need to cross the “line in the spirit” where joy becomes evident in our praise. If we will do that, I believe we will see signs and wonders.

Praise is a substance. I saw all praise ascending out of the mouths of the people as bright, glowing vapors that collected at the top of the building. When the service was complete, the collected praise shot out of the top of the building and went to the throne room of God. I realized that praise and worship are

not a routing or merely a preliminary to a message; they are a substance that is created.

In my ministry, I have seen many miracles occur as we have worshiped God, when everyone present was giving his or her all to God. This is the secret—you must not hold back, but give everything you have to God in order to receive everything He has to give you in return. Likewise, those saints I saw in Heaven gave 100 percent to everything they did. They greatly enjoyed the service and said afterward that they could not wait for the next one. Praising God will be a tremendous part of our lives when we get to Heaven.

Jesus asked me, “How did you like the service?”

I replied, “I loved it!”

Tears of Intercession

We left the building, and as we walked along, Jesus began to weep. I was astounded. Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, began to cry! He turned toward me, shedding tears of intercession. Some things are too sacred to repeat, but this one thing He told me I could tell:

“Roberts, I love My people so much that I would go back to earth, preach My three years over again, and die for just one person. If I had not already paid the price for them, and if I thought they wanted to come to Heaven, I would do it all over again.

“I would not have to *know* they would make it. If I just thought they *wanted* to come, I would do it for them, even if they were the greatest sinners of all.”

He said repeatedly, “I love My people so much. Why do people not take Me at My word? Do they not know that I have all power in Heaven and on earth to back up what I said? It is so easy. I made it so simple. If people will just take Me at My word, I will do what I said.”

Then He wept even more and said, “I do not understand why people say they believe I will do something, but when it does not happen in their time, they begin to doubt My word. If they will just believe and say with confidence that I will do it, I will do it at the correct time.”

I knew that Jesus was crying because of our unbelief and lack of faith. Even though I was only eight years old, I knew

what unbelief was and how it hurt Him. I made a covenant, an agreement and solemn commitment, with Jesus right then never to doubt His words, and to let God be God. Now, when I am about to think or say something filled with doubt, I remember the tears of intercession that fell from Jesus' eyes, and I rid myself of doubt and unbelief. Unbelief slaps Jesus in the face; it is a rejection of *Him*. He wants us to be filled with faith—strong faith!

The River of Life

Jesus and I continued on together and came to a branch of the river of life. I assume there is only one river in Heaven, although there may be more; I saw only one. The river of life is described in Revelation 22:1 as being crystal bright, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. In Revelation 22:17, Jesus says that He gives the pure water from it freely to the thirsty. It purifies you and cleanses you of the contamination of the earth life and gives you strength from its source, that place where God sits and rules as King of the universe.

When Jesus and I walked up to the river of life, we didn't just look at it, but walked into it. It was knee-deep and perfectly clear. Unlike a river on earth, it doesn't just flow around you. It flows *through* you, and you feel a surge of energy come up out of that water and into your being.

Then Jesus did something that is quite personal and extremely precious to me. I love to tell this part of the story.

The Lord Jesus, the Holy Son of God, reached over and dunked me under the water of the river of life.

So I got back up, splashed Him, and we proceeded right there to have a water fight, splashing each other and laughing.

This is not easy for some people to understand, and I have sometimes received the response, "How dare you splash the Lord Jesus in the river of life!" My only answer to this is, "Well, He started it!"

As unexpected as it might be to hear this, or for me to experience it, it meant something really profound to me. Jesus, the King of Glory, the Holy Lamb of God, took time out for little eight-year-old Roberts Liardon to play with him in the river of life. He related to me in a way that I could particularly understand and respond to as an eight-year-old boy.

When my time on earth is done and I return to Heaven forever, I want to put up a historical marker on that spot, which will say: This spot is where Jesus Christ became not only Roberts Liardon's Lord and Savior, but his Friend.

This is holy and very special to me. Jesus is still the rightful Lord of the entire universe. He is the only Savior of mankind. But that day, He became my personal friend. It has been that single experience that has helped me all through my life. When circumstances and the enemy have buffeted me, when I have felt like quitting, it is this one moment that has caught me, picked me up, and kept me on the path God has marked out for me.

If believers here on earth could come to know Him not only as Lord and Savior, but also as friend, how it would transform their lives! In times of temptation, failure, and sin, they would run to Him, instead of away from Him. They would find that He is concerned with the smallest and most intimate areas of their lives and that He longs to help them and make their path clear and straight. They would serve Him with joy in willing response to His love, rather than cower before Him as a taskmaster whose wrath they fear. They would know that He is *for* them and not against them.

After Jesus and I played in the river of life for a while, we got out. It was as if a giant hair dryer then began to blow and dried our clothes instantly. We put on our shoes and departed, and we began to walk past more buildings, seeing other people.

Then we passed something I never expected to see in Heaven and which struck me at the time as the funniest thing I had seen. Yet, when I considered it later, it was one of the most moving and encouraging sights of my Christian walk with God.

Hebrews 12:1 speaks of a “great cloud of witnesses”:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us (NIV).

I saw that great cloud of witnesses. *They are aware of what the Church is doing spiritually.* When I am preaching, for example, they are cheering me on, yelling, “Do this...do that... go!” When “halftime” comes, every one of them hits his knees and begins to pray. Halftime is prayer time. Then they get back up and start cheering again.

It is as though we are in a big game, one that is serious and for real—not a game just for fun! And we have some fans who are cheering us on. They are backing us 100 percent saying, “Go! Go get ’em! That’s right. Go!”

If we clearly understood the Scripture about there being one family in Heaven and earth, we would hear in our spirits what our family in Heaven is saying. If we could hear that

“*cloud of witnesses*,” we would be successful in every area of our lives. To do this, we must enter the realm of the spirit through prayer and time spent with the Lord.

People have asked me from time to time about their own family members who have passed on: “Will I see my cousin when I get to Heaven, and will I know him?” I have been asked if I saw any of my family members who went on before, and I did not. I saw the Lord, angels, and various people. I know who my relatives are, but I did not happen to see them.

I am convinced that even though you *will* recognize your cousin or wife or child when you get to Heaven, you may be surprised to discover that the importance of your *spiritual family* outweighs that of your natural family. While your natural family members in Heaven will always be precious to you, there will be some relationships with the spiritual family in Heaven that will be equally and sometimes more important to you there.

CHAPTER FIVE

Blessings That Haven't Been Claimed

The next sight on my tour of Heaven was another building. This one was very large and had a particularly strange appearance to me. I became very curious about this building because lightning flashed into it, and I heard rumblings of thunder from within.

Usually, I asked questions of Jesus in an audible voice, and He answered me audibly. This time, however, I just thought, I wonder what that building is, and His answer came to me immediately.

“It is the throne room of God.”

Another unique aspect of this building was the seven rows of flowers in the front. They lined the pathway up to the door. The colors of these flowers changed constantly into all the colors of the rainbow. Every flower, bud, and leaf was uniform in size.

Also, in front of this building were 12 trees—not trees such as that grow on earth, but Heaven's trees. I saw the tree of wisdom that bears the fruit of wisdom, the tree of love that bears the fruit of love, and so forth. Revelation 22:2 tells us about the tree of life and its fruit and leaves:

On each side of the river grew Trees of Life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month; the leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations (TLB).

That is exactly what I saw. I also saw two warrior angels standing in front of the door. Each held a sword, and the blades of these swords were flames of fire. These two angels always stand outside the throne room with their flaming swords fully lit.

The Storehouses of Heaven

We walked a little farther, and *this is perhaps the strangest part of my story*. I saw three storage houses, five to six hundred yards from the throne room of God. They were very long and wide and seemed to be shaped similarly to one of those large chicken houses you see out in the countryside where hundreds of chickens are raised. There may be more of these storehouses, but I saw only three.

We walked into the first one. As Jesus shut the front door behind us, I looked around the interior in shock!

On one side of the building I saw exterior parts of the human body, all different colors, corresponding to different ethnic groups. And on the other side of the building, I saw eyes—green, brown, blue ones— eyes of all colors. It all appeared very normal to me.

I realize people may ask what the biblical basis for this storehouse is. There are no Scriptures supporting it, but neither does it violate the principles of Scripture. As an adult, if I saw that today, I'd have many questions. But at age eight, I simply observed.

This building contained all the parts of the human body that people on earth need, but Christians have not realized these blessings are waiting for them in Heaven. There is no place else in the universe for these parts to go except right here on earth; no one else needs them.

Jesus then began to tell me, and I am paraphrasing Him,

that these were the *unclaimed blessings*. He said that this building should not be full, but rather that it should be emptied. I was to go in there with faith and get the needed parts for the people with whom I would come in contact that day.

The unclaimed blessings are there in those storehouses—all the parts of the body that people might need. Hundreds of new eyes, legs, skin, hair, eardrums—they all are there. All you have to do is go in and get what you need by the hand of faith, because it is there!

You do not have to cry and beg God to make the part you need. Just go get it. The doors to the storehouse are never locked. They are always open for those who need to go in. *We should empty those buildings!*

Sometimes when we pray, an angel will leave Heaven to bring us the answer just as the angel did for Daniel, in Daniel 10:12, but will not be able to get through right away. Daniel continued to pray and fast for 21 days until he received his answer. Because of his persistence in prayer, the angel was able to break through demonic hindrances. What would have happened if Daniel had not kept praying and “pressing in” to God for his answer?

If he were like many Christians today, he would have said, “This doesn’t work! God didn’t answer!” And he would never have received his miracle. In the same way that Daniel did, we must continue to believe God. He has said those storehouses would one day be empty—it’s up to us. We need to behold the miraculous in a new way because the closer we come to the end of this age, the greater increase we will see in signs and

wonders. See yourself in a position to be one who works miracles on the earth!

Jesus Wants Us Healed and Whole

Because of my visit to Heaven, I never had any doubt that Jesus not only wants His people well and whole, but that healing is available for any who will receive. During my visit, I knew without any doubt that God did not have sickness or disease in Heaven, but rather He had made provision for creative miracles here on earth, where limbs grow back or organs are reformed over a short period of time.

Everything God gives us, has made for us, or provided for us has its source in Him and His heavenly Kingdom. So how could He give us sickness and disease when it is a purely earthly phenomenon, a result of the fall of Adam and Eve? Sickness, disease, lack of anything, and all the other woes of earth come from satan, the father of lies and the cause of death and destruction.

However, I don't base my knowledge of Jesus' provision for healing on my experience in Heaven. I base it on the Word of God. There are many good books available on healing and not enough space in this one to deal with it in detail. But I do want to give two Scriptures that prove healing is ours, for the benefit of those who may not know this or may have been taught otherwise.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that

brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5 NIV).

This was a prophetic statement made by Isaiah as he looked forward to the time when Jesus would come to earth as the Messiah and go to the cross for mankind.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed (1 Peter 2:24 NIV).

The apostle Peter quoted that same passage from Isaiah, but changed the verb. Isaiah looked to the future; Peter used a past-tense verb. Isaiah looked forward to the advent of Jesus who would come “*with healing in his wings*” (Mal. 4:2). Peter however, spoke of our healing as already having been accomplished for us.

Jesus wants us to be physically well for two reasons: He loves us and does not want us to be in pain, and He wants us to be able to do His will in ministry or in our lives without hindrances. Sickness and disease keep your mind on yourself rather than on others; they drain finances that could be used in the Lord’s work and give satan that much victory in your life.

I have met many people who have been taught that God uses sickness and disease “to teach us a lesson.” That is totally unscriptural. Would you give measles or smallpox to your child to “teach him or her a lesson”? If so, you would be no better than a child abuser. Likewise, God would be considered a child abuser if He disciplined us with sickness and disease.

In Matthew 7:11, Jesus pointed out that if earthly fathers give their children good things, how much more will our Father in Heaven give good things to us who are His children! He asked them if they would give their children a snake if they asked for a fish. And so, why do people think God would do such a thing? Healing is a good thing, and God wants to give it to us.

I did not know all these things when I visited Heaven, but I learned them from God's Word as I grew up. However, I knew after my visit that it is always the will of God to heal everyone who will hear and obey, which under the new covenant means walking in the love of God and your neighbor, and in faith. Jesus said:

Listen to Me! You can pray for anything, and if you believe, you have it; it's yours! (Mark 11:24 TLB)

But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord (James 1:6-7 NIV).

Even before my visit to Heaven, as long as I can remember, I have believed that God's Word is true.

After Jesus showed me the throne room of God and the place where all the unclaimed blessings are kept, we walked on a while and were quiet. I was thinking over everything I had seen and was content just to be in the presence of Jesus.

Then Jesus began to tell me what He had called me to do as

my life's work on earth.

CHAPTER SIX

Jesus Ordained Me to His Work

Jesus stopped, faced me, and took both my hands in one of His, placing His other hand on top of my head. He said to me, “Roberts, I am calling you to a great work. I am ordaining you to a great work. You will have to run like no one else and preach like no one else. You will have to be different from everyone else.”

In other words, He was telling me not to copy others, not to try to fit into religious attitudes and patterns, but simply to do and be only what He wanted.

“Hard times will come,” He warned me, “but take them as stepping stones, not as stumbling blocks. Go with power and with faith. I will be beside you wherever you go. Go, go, go, go and do as I have done.”

The first time Jesus said, “Go,” the anointing and the fire of God began to flow from Him into me. It felt as if I were burning. Now, every time I talk about God, whether it is to one or three thousand, I am set afire all over again, just as Luke 3:16 says:

John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire (NIV).

God's people, the Church, need to experience the "fire" of God, which is what burns out all the "chaff," the impurities, in your life. Hebrews 12:29 tells us:

For our God is a consuming fire (NIV).

I cannot tell all that He said to me that day for it is too personal. However, I can say this—if you will let the fire of the Holy Spirit shoot through your being and make you pure, you will be able to walk boldly before God with a clean heart and a clear mind. You will know you can walk into His presence where you belong without being destroyed by His glory.

After praying for me and ordaining me to His work, Jesus took a step backward. I then looked down at the palms of my hands. Their appearance seemed almost as red as blood.

As Jesus stepped back from me, it was as if He pulled down a large screen out of the air. On this screen, He began to show me my past life. Of course, at eight years of age, I did not have much of a past life.

When Jesus began to show me my future ministry and the people who would be saved through it, however, I did not want to miss reaching a single one of them—even if it *did* mean living to be an old man.

He said, "I want you to return to earth, and not be like anyone whom you've ever met or known, and do exactly what I've called you to do. I've placed inside you the ability and the strength to do it."

The greatest miracle, greater than even raising Lazarus from

the dead is the one that occurs when someone is born again—raised from spiritual death and rescued from eternal damnation. In John 3:3, Jesus spoke of this greatest of miracles and the necessity of it for us to enter Heaven:

I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again (NIV).

Among other passages, the apostle Paul explains what happens to the person who is born again in Second Corinthians 5:17:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (NIV)

As He spoke these things to me, I saw myself preaching in various places. The screen disappeared. Then, I knew it was time to go.

I was turning to leave through the nearest gate when Jesus said, “Roberts!” And I turned back very quickly. There stood Jesus with tears falling down His face and with His hands outstretched to me.

“I love you!”

When He said that, I left Heaven and returned to my earthly home.

Meeting My Angel

On my way back toward earth, I remember meeting my angel, who flew up next to me and introduced himself. “I am the one who is with you. I’m the one who stands with you. I’m the one who assists you. I’m the one who protects you.” And he began to list the various services he performs for me.

Then he told me, “I will be with you, even throughout eternity, and I will stand by your side. There will be other angels who will come and go throughout your life, according to the season and the anointings that you carry. There will be different angels, for angels and anointings work together.”

And then I was back in my room.

Back on Earth

I was startled, of course, and I lay on my bed wondering about everything I had just experienced. I realized the experience had indeed been real, because the fire of God and the anointing continued to flow in me for several hours after I came back.

My trip to Heaven had been so special that I cherished it close within me for a while. I was not sure that anyone would believe a little boy could be taken to Heaven for a tour with Jesus. Thus, it was nearly eight more years before I ever told anyone about this experience.

I have always sensed that I was a type of forerunner for the young people whom God will use in this generation. In my ministry, I challenge the older people to fulfill God's calling, but I identify with the young people.

My life and ministry, I believe, have become examples of what God can do with you, *if you will pay the price*. The price is total commitment, being totally "sold out," as it were, to the will of God. Part of that price is praying each day and studying God's Word. The price requires putting Jesus before absolutely everything else.

First, you must choose whom you are going to serve. You will have to give up everything you have into God's hands—everything from A to Z and beyond.

Jesus and I are friends. We walk and talk together. When I travel, we get on the plane together. He sits down beside me.

He does everything with me.

In the mornings, when I wake, I say, “Good morning, Father. Good morning, Jesus. Good morning, Holy Spirit.” We cannot know the Trinity of the Godhead by our feelings, but rather we learn to know them by the Word of God. Our emotions are fickle; they have been influenced by the environment of this world and by its thinking. They are not dependable. But if we will study God’s Word, we *will* learn to know God better.

God has a personality. He has emotions. He can be hurt because we have not talked to Him or spent time with Him lately. I have found that He is three things: *light, life, and love*. God loves people so much that the love simply boils up out of His being.

All throughout the Bible, men have been friends of God. Abraham is referred to particularly as the friend of God. Daniel talked with God. Likewise, you can be a friend of God. When was the last time you said, “God, I love You”? Perhaps that time is overdue. Jesus wants us to be friends with Him. Many people who are His servants are not His friends; to be His friend requires our obedience.

God wants to know you intimately, and He will meet you more than halfway. All you need to do is sit down and say, “God, I want to talk to You.”

Jesus cares about you! If He did not, He would not have died for you. He is concerned about everything that concerns

you—your lifestyle, your welfare, your family, everything.

The Holy Spirit wants to do wonderful works on your behalf. He is the One who opens blind eyes and also takes the spiritual blinders off people's eyes. He is the One who reveals the things of God to you. *He is the Trinity's power on earth*, and the One who has come to live inside you. According to Romans 8:11, His is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. If we could really grasp that, none of us would remain sick.

You and I need to learn how to walk and talk with God in the same way that Enoch did. The Bible tells us in Genesis 5:24 that Enoch walked with God and then, one day, "*he was not.*" His relationship with God was so intimate that God simply took him up to Heaven. We need to get to know God just for who He is and not only for His benefits to us. When our hearts are right toward God, when we love, honor, and reverence Him, we will receive His benefits, too.

He is a big God—big enough to take care of our little problems. The great English preacher from the early part of the 20th century, Smith Wigglesworth, said that we must look at earth's problems from Heaven's viewpoint.

God is alive and well today, and He sits upon His throne in Heaven!

Endnotes

1. A “false vision,” that is, one not from God, is mentioned in Jeremiah 14:14 and 23:16.
2. Kenneth E. Hagin, *I Believe in Visions* (Scottsdale, AZ: Faith Library Publications, 1984). (Publications of Dr. Lester Sumrall and Norvel Hayes are also widely available concerning Heaven.)
3. Rebecca Springer, *Within Heaven’s Gates* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1984).
4. Jesse Duplantis, *Heaven, Close Encounters of the God Kind* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1996).
5. John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (Gonic, NH: The Odyssey Press, 1999).
6. Roy Hicks, *Guardian Angels: How to Activate Their Ministry in Your Life* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1999).

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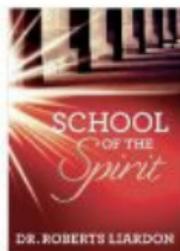
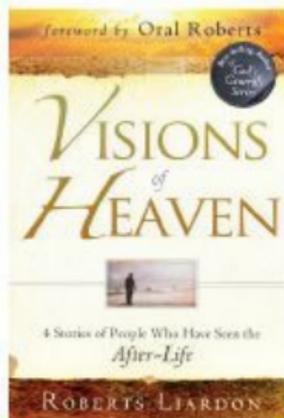
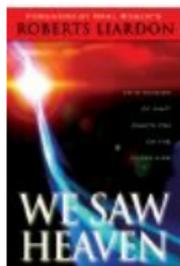
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