

Is Seeing Believing? *By Pastor Melvin E. Barnett*

I had a thought the other day as my children lay watching their carefully chosen video for the day, "The Polar Express". As I sat emailing and surfing the Internet a strange contrast began to develop in my spirit as I caught bits and pieces of the movie. Each child has to come to terms with this reality: Is Santa real or not? More importantly every person must also come to terms with the reality of the existence as well as acceptance of Jesus Christ.

For most children who live in a civilized society, the journey to adulthood will likely cross path with the acceptance or denial of Santa Claus. The spirit of Christmas is very real, and the push for commerce will surely aid every parent who wishes to build an iron-clad defense for St. Nick. As a child growing up in a middle class, all American home I enjoyed the festivities of each holiday along with the fairy tales that came with the gifts, candy, charms, and even pulled teeth. I, like most every adult, got past the acute depression suffered as I came to terms with the fact that Santa, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy did not exist.

The children aboard the Polar Express all come to terms with the spirit of Christmas as they experience firsthand the splendor and festivities of Christmas Eve at the North Pole. Strangely enough, for one of the characters, seeing isn't enough to simply grasp the reality of Christmas and believe. Standing in a crowded parade filled with all the fanfare of the holiday, streets packed with elves cheering on the clicking clock for the final moments before Santa departs on his journey to every home, one child is deaf to the sound of festivities. Then, all of a sudden, the child picks up a bell that is thrown from one of the reindeer. Slowly lifting the bell to his ear, he hears for the first time its ring. As he listens to the ringing of the bell, the surrounding sounds of holiday cheer began to amplify in his ear as he starts to believe.

Outside of a dream, the unbeliever will never have a chance to see Heaven and its majestic beauty. He will never look upon the foundation of the City of God which is made up of twelve precious jewels that support twelve towering walls of jasper. He will never walk through the gates of pearl as he strolls down streets of gold. A city where day never ends and praise and worship never cease he will never see nor hear.

But, suppose the unbeliever, for once in his life, could experience this splendor, see a city that is filled with joy, where there is neither pain nor sorrow, would he believe? Would he repent of his sins, accept the sacrifice that was made on Calvary, and ask Jesus Christ to come into his life and save him? People say, "Seeing is believing"; however, thousands saw Jesus heal the sick, raise the dead, and feed the hungry yet still scorned and mocked Him as they cried, "Crucify him!" as He made his way up Via Dolorosa to Golgotha where He willingly laid down his Life and became Sin so every man, woman and child could have eternal life.

Perhaps, just as the child held that bell to his ear, the unbeliever might find one answered prayer and begin to open his eyes and hear with his ears the wonderful Word of God, accept Jesus Christ, and be part of that journey to Heaven some day.