**HEAVEN IS FOR REAL**



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| **Family Movie:** | **HIS** | **HER** | **AVG** |
| **1. Appropriate for teenagers (eg. language, sexuality, violence)?** | 9.5 | 9.5 | 9.5 |
| **2. Entertainment value for girl teenagers (12 and up)?** | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| **3. Entertainment value for boy teenagers (12 and up)?** | 7.5 | 7 | 7.25 |
| **4. Entertainment value for adult females?** | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| **5. Entertainment value for adult males?** | 8 | 7.5 | 7.75 |
| **6. Teaching moments, role models, moral of story?** | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| **7. Is it a “classic”? (Replay value?)** | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| **8. Audio/Visual effects?** | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| **9. Not too cliché (unique and witty, not too slapstick)** | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| **10. Climax/Resolution/Ending?** | 8.5 | 8.5 | 8.5 |
| **GRAND TOTALS:** |  |  | 82% |

**His Thoughts:**This movie was interesting to say the least. The reactions and conversations amongst the Christians in the audience (assuming most were Christian based on the content of the movie) before and after the movie being the most interesting things about the movie. I confess that a Mormon viewing a movie like this is different than most of the “Christian World” and that was made blaringly obvious listening to the audience talk before and after the movie; here are the main differences, call me names if you want they are just the facts…

1. Most Christians don’t know what the Hell (har har har) they believe. The Bible? Parts of the Bible but not others? The Pope? Some things the Pope says but not others? Seriously though, what is Heaven? When is it? Do you have bodies in Heaven? When does the resurrection occur? What is the color of Jesus’ eyes? What is the resurrection and why does Jesus promise all that they will get it when the Pope and others are telling me we will not have bodies in Heaven? If we only go to Heaven AFTER we have been judged where do people go as soon as they die? How do we make sense of the New Testament when it said when Jesus was dead for those three days that: “For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit... by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison…  ” (1 Peter chapters 3+4) ?? Questions question questions! Most Christians are not even sure if they understand or even believe “what is required to get to Heaven” let alone “when it happens, how it happens, and what is it like?” So when they go to a movie like this and they watch it and want to “know if it is true- did this really happen to this boy?” they don’t have any concrete DOCTRINE to be able to go to and say “well, there is no way that this could have happened because the DOCTRINE and my BELIEFS clearly say \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and he said \_\_\_\_\_\_” or the opposite, “it clearly happened to the boy because he said \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and my doctrine and beliefs say \_\_\_\_\_\_”. Instead you have Christians (who are supposed to be spiritual creatures yes?) arguing and debating whether or not this happened based off of theories, nature vs nurture, psychology, sociology, etc etc etc… It made me very perplexed and honestly heart broken and a deep realization hit me- almost all of these people don’t even believe in their own religion, how could they when they don’t even honestly know what their own religion and beliefs ARE?

2.  Most Mormons know too much. Seriously, we have all the answers. Is this a problem? Yes it is! These confused (and honestly ANGRY most of the time) Christians come up to their Mormon friends and ask them questions (themselves being almost always completely ignorant on the subject at hand) and Mormons proceed to give a detailed account of what happens to you after you die, down to the very order and time and the whole while giving you scriptural references for it (in their friend’s own Bible) - causes problems. Why does that cause problems you say? They came with questions and you gave them actual answers with scriptural backing in their own personal Bibles- that should make them happy no? NO! IT DOESN’T! In almost all cases this makes them even MORE upset! If they don’t already immediately assume that you are one of those “cocky bible thumping types” and walk away they will almost assuredly think you are crazy when they ask their pastor about you (“ummm…. Hey pastor… Why is it that I was never taught that fornication is bad and this Mormon could point it out in over a half a dozen places in my Bible in 10 seconds? Why don’t we learn any real doctrine?”) and he then has to convince you that Mormons sacrifice babies in their temples and steal women from Europe to make them slaves and on and on and on so that you won’t EVER go back to them again for REAL answers because God knows, he would lose his job! We as Mormons need to understand that most of the Christian world honestly has no clue, and when they ask “broad questions” we need to give “broad answers” and stop picking everything apart down to the very core.

These two things made watching the movie (if I am being honest) a problem for me. I didn’t go into the movie expecting to “feel good about this boy who went to paradise in the spirit world and came back to tell us about it”, I went into this movie wholly expecting to tear this movie apart from the inside out with Christ’s own words and doctrine- not with theories, or nature vs nurture, or psychology, or sociology… What I found out piece by piece was that this could have actually happened to this boy, and every piece of the puzzle (at least in the movie- I have heard in the book things are much different) was actually correct as far as the doctrine was concerned. If I had gone into it more with an open mind I might have enjoyed it more, as it stands I was a little surprised by the end of the movie and was nodding my head thinking “yeah, most of that COULD have happened…” surprisingly enough most of the audience was completely the opposite: they went INTO the movie thinking it could be real and came OUT of the movie questioning.  Some key things that the movie got RIGHT:

1. The first person you see when you die (or when your spirit leaves your body) is Jesus Christ.
2. He does not have brown eyes, and is not skinny and pale. He is however kind and comforting with light colored eyes and auburn hair.
3. Angels and Jesus do not have wings and also have a sense of humor (wings most likely being just the light radiating from their arms and hands- which is what is shown IN THE MOVIE)
4. In the spirit world (the time between death and the resurrection- after the resurrection is when you are judged and go to “heaven”- this is NOT heaven…) people do not have bodies of flesh and blood but are just personages of spirit. This would mean that they are not “old” and do not have need of things like glasses and walkers.
5. Family structures can continue on after death and are a major part of our Father in Heaven’s Plan of Happiness.
6. Jesus Christ has nail print scars in his wrist, hands, and feet.
7. There are animals in Heaven and Jesus loves them.

Apparently in the book some things were different than the movie, such as angels actually having large wings and Jesus saying that “all non- Presbyterians will burn in Hell” but both of THOSE could easily be written off as a four year old saying what he thinks his parents want to hear. The grand majority of what apparently happened to the boy could have actually happened to the boy, the very few “outliers” in the boy’s story are just that, “outliers” and they were NOT included in the movie. What was in the movie was good; will it turn a few eyebrows? Yes. Surprisingly enough what was IN THE MOVIE should however NOT turn up any Mormons eyebrows as the seven major points of the movie listed above were all already VERY well known to Mormons. Everyone else should be very aware of what they are getting into; a very Christian story about a boy’s “near death experience” in which his spirit left his body and went temporarily to paradise in the spirit world before returning once again to his body to tell the story. If that doesn’t sound appealing to you, trust me when I say the movie WILL NOT CHANGE YOUR MIND, so don’t go! If that is something that appeals to you I would just point you above to the 7 major points of the movie that I listed above; if any of THOSE bother you the MOVIE will bother you and you will then spend the next half an hour AFTER the movie trying to convince yourself and everyone around you that he “had to be making it up”, in which case I would also recommend NOT GOING TO THIS MOVIE! Because of the polarizing content OF the movie it will make it hard to give it an “overall feel” as some will hate it, some will love it, and others will just continue to be confused.

**Her Thoughts:** I was a little worried going into the movie that there was going to be something said that would make the story not believable for me. However, based on my beliefs and what was shown in the movie, I can say that this little boy very well could have experienced a trip to "heaven." Overall the movie was a little "hallmark" and probably just worthy of being a rental. The special effects were a little cheesy (who still uses fog machines?) but the overall message was full of hope :) Oh, and it was filmed in Manitoba which is kind of neat!