

## General Topics :: Urban Myths (Lies) You've Probably Heard From The Pulpit

### Urban Myths (Lies) You've Probably Heard From The Pulpit, on: 2011/6/6 5:43

(This is from Trevin Wax's blog, but I've also read similar lists at other places. I have researched these for myself and found that what is posted here is true... or should I say "false")

1. The "eye of the needle" refers to a gate outside Jerusalem.

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God," says Jesus in Mark 10:25. Maybe you've heard of the gate in Jerusalem called the "eye of the needle." The camel could pass through it only after stooping down and having all its baggage taken off.

The illustration is used in many sermons as an example of coming to God on our knees and without our baggage. The only problem is... there is no evidence for such a gate. The story has been around since the 15th century, but there isn't a shred of evidence to support it.

2. The high priest tied a rope around his ankle so that others could drag him out of the Holy of Holies in case God struck him dead.

Various versions of this claim have been repeated by pastors, but it is a legend. It started in the Middle Ages and keeps getting repeated. There is no evidence for the claim in the Bible, the Apocrypha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, the Pseudepigrapha, the Talmud, Mishna or any other source. Furthermore, the thickness of the veil (three feet) would have precluded the possibility of a priest being dragged out anyway.

3. Scribes took baths, discarded their pens, washed their hands, etc. every time they wrote the name of God.

As a way of getting across the reverence of the Jewish and Christian scribes toward God, preachers like to describe the honor given to God's name. Unfortunately, there's no evidence that scribes did these sorts of rituals every time they came across the name of God.

4. There was this saying among the sages: "May you be covered in your rabbi's dust."

This is one of the most pervasive and fast-spreading stories to flood the church in recent years. The idea is that as you walked behind your rabbi, he would kick up dust and you would become caked in it, and so following your rabbi closely came to symbolize your commitment and zeal.

5. Voltaire's house is now owned by a Bible-printing publisher.

Voltaire was famous for saying, "One hundred years from my day there will not be a Bible in the earth except one that is looked upon by an antiquarian curiosity seeker." There is a myth out there that within 50 years of Voltaire's death, his house was owned by a Bible society that used his own printing press to make Bibles. Sounds like a great story, but it's not true. Regardless, Voltaire's prediction of the demise of the Bible was vastly overstated.

6. Gehenna was a burning trash dump outside Jerusalem.

I've used this illustration many times. But there isn't evidence to support this idea. Still, because it seems like a reasonable explanation for the origin of the Hinnom Valley as "hell," commentators and preachers have accepted it. It's possible that the verdict may still be out on this one, but not if Todd Bolen is right:

"The explanation for the 'fire of Gehenna' lies not in a burning trash dump, but in the burning of sacrificed children. Already in Old Testament times, the Valley of Hinnom was associated with the destiny of the wicked. That the valley was just outside the city of Jerusalem made it an appropriate symbol for those excluded from divine blessing."

7. NASA scientists have discovered a "missing day" which corresponds to the Joshua account of the sun standing still

I.

Please don't repeat this myth. There has been no "missing day" discovered, and the legend has been circulating longer than NASA has been in existence, with different scientists playing the part.

**Re: Urban Myths (Lies) You've Probably Heard From The Pulpit - posted by enid, on: 2011/6/6 7:43**

I think I've heard of most of those, especially the one concerning the camel going through the eye of the needle.

When Jesus said that, to compare with the rich getting into heaven, He meant it.

But people twisting scripture, or misunderstanding it, is nothing new.

There's nothing new under the sun...

**Re: Urban Myths (Lies) You've Probably Heard From The Pulpit - posted by DEADn (), on: 2011/6/6 8:29**

How many more things would be considered urban myths preached from the pulpit? Stuff like this can be enough to disillusion some people to wondering if there is anything true in Christianity.

**Re: , on: 2011/6/6 9:06**

In the modern "evangelical" fad church... quite a bit. That's what happens when the man in the pulpit buys his sermons online, preaches to the goats and does silly and stupid things in order to supposedly "attract" the world into the church. What's ironic is the world looks at such things and sees them for what they are... silly and stupid.

Krispy

**Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2011/6/6 11:27**

I have heard some of these, Krispy. I wanted to add the oft-repeated myth that someone "drilled" into Hell.

<http://www.snopes.com/religion/wellhell.asp>

When I first heard this, I was amazed that anyone would actually have believed such a thing. Yet I have heard four different people (three who are ministers) repeat it.

**Re: Urban Myths (Lies) You've Probably Heard From The Pulpit - posted by Theophila (), on: 2011/6/6 12:27**

Wow, brother!

I had never heard of #3 and #4.....you live and learn.

Thanks for posting this.

**Re: - posted by Areadymind (), on: 2011/6/6 12:47**

As Christians we should be the most willing to discover and prove that which is good. These are a great lesson on why it is important to Bereanize everything. Not just what the scriptures say, but certainly that above all. I read this blog a month or two ago and was glad to see those myths go. I hope more and more preachers get directed to that link.

**Re: Urban Myths (Lies) You've Probably Heard From The Pulpit, on: 2011/6/6 17:11**

I must confess I fell for the Voltaire one. And even the NASA. Ok we want talk of my experiences with Area 51. But before I make a further fool of myself. Not that I haven't in this forum I need my betters to correct me on these possible urban myths. Is it true that Madeine Murray O'hare's son was converted to Christ and is a gospel minister? Is it true that Normal MacOrlvey is Roe in Roe vs Wade? Is it true she is converted? Is it true that the recent earthquake in Japan shifted the earth 10 degrees on its axis? Is it true that God has converted muslim terrorist in Saul of Tarsus like experiences? Your answers to these possible urban myths may spare me from possible embarrassment at a dinner fellowship. Though I will continue to embarrass myself in this forum.

**Re: Urban Myths (Lies) You've Probably Heard From The Pulpit - posted by lylewise, on: 2011/6/6 17:34**

I'll take #2 for \$500.00 Can we reference the thickness of the veil? Three feet?

**Re: Veil, on: 2011/6/6 17:54**

I had heard it was 5 feet thick. Or was that cubits?

**Re: - posted by lylewise, on: 2011/6/6 19:11**

From what I researched regarding tradition as well as thread make up and custom it appears to be around 4" thick. I purchased some movie theater drapes that were a little less than 1/2 inch thick and they were almost too heavy for one man to carry just one of the four drapes. If you consider four inch thickness with the weight of what is being described, now that would be a feat. Christ tearing it, No problem, but the Jews trying to hang something of that weight? Incredible!

**Re: , on: 2011/6/6 20:42**

That's incredible. And after seeing that tear the Jews still would not believe in Jesus as their messiah.

**Re: - posted by JB1968 (), on: 2011/6/6 22:13**

I question some of this research. The valley of Hinnom was a place of child sacrifice and awful pagan worship. It appears that by the time of Christ this area had become a never ending burning trash heap which made it an easy illustration of the fires of hell.

**Re: , on: 2011/6/7 7:03**

Quote:

-----I must confess I fell for the Voltaire one. And even the NASA. Ok we want talk of my experiences with Area 51. But before I make a further fool of myself. Not that I haven't in this forum I need my betters to correct me on these possible urban myths. Is it true that Madeine Murray O'hare's son was converted to Christ and is a gospel minister? Is it true that Norma MacOrlvey is Roe in Roe vs Wade? Is it true she is converted? Is it true that the recent earthquake in Japan shifted the earth 10 degrees on its axis? Is it true that God has converted muslim terrorist in Saul of Tarsus like experiences? Your answers to these possible urban myths may spare me from possible embarrassment at a dinner fellowship. Though I will continue to embarrass myself in this forum.  
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Yes, it is true that Norma MacOrlvey (or however you spell her last name) was Roe in Roe vs. Wade... and yes, she claims to be a born again Christian and is now working for a Pro-Life organization. I've actually seen her interviewed before. .. I think on FoxNews.

As to the other things you mentioned, I've heard them all before but do not have the time right now to investigate them for you.

Krispy

**Re: , on: 2011/6/7 7:05**

Quote:

-----I question some of this research. The valley of Hinnom was a place of child sacrifice and awful pagan worship. It appears that by the time of Christ this area had become a never ending burning trash heap which made it an easy illustration of the fires of hell.  
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To the best of my ability I researched these things before I posted them (mainly because I hate being wrong in front of everyone... lol). However, if you can show that I am in error please do so. We should all be about the truth, even if it means we have to be corrected.

Krispy

**Re: Urban Myths (Lies) You've Probably Heard From The Pulpit - posted by LoisTverberg, on: 2012/2/3 15:33**

I recently wrote a historical analysis of the saying about "being covered in the dust of your rabbi."

<http://ourrabbijesus.com/2012/01/27/covered-in-the-dust-of-your-rabbi-an-urban-legend/>

It's not an urban legend. The idea actually originates from a well-known scholar of first-century Judaism.

**Re: - posted by JB1968 (), on: 2012/2/3 18:49**

International Standard Biblical Encyclopedia: Gehenna and Valley of Hinnom entry. Rather than copy and paste it here, check out these classic reference tools.

Easton's Bible Dictionary: Gehenna entry.

There are many other references that can be found on E-Sword.net or Biblestudytools.com for free.

**Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2012/2/3 19:22**

It stands to reason if these are all urban myths than how many more myths are we hearing from the pulpit thinking it is truth? Do you ever wonder?

**Re: - posted by hoohoou (), on: 2012/2/4 22:46**

I think the problem is that preachers, for whatever reason, have moved away from just preaching the Gospel. In an attempt to persuade as many as possible they have grasped at straws in order to make the faith more real.

I think preaching the basic Gospel and how that applies to our life could take multiple lifetimes to complete. I'm not sure you'd ever finish. Take Paul Washer for example. I watched an interview where he was amazed so many people wanted to hear him speak. He said he only had about 2-3 sermons that he would tackle from different perspectives.

Do we need any more than that?

**Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2012/2/5 5:38**

Quote:  
-----hoohoou  
I think the problem is that preachers, for whatever reason, have moved away from just preaching the Gospel. In an attempt to persuade as many as possible they have grasped at straws in order to make the faith more real.  
-----

This is the gospel according to Lisa and you are free to disagree!! I would call it "emotionalism" and it seems that a huge bunch of the preachers in the church began using it when the Holy Spirit left the building; since the Holy Spirit wasn't there to convict people, they had to come up with "ways" to get people to the altar. I guess a better question would be why did the Holy Spirit leave their church (if He actually did, of course)?

Quote:  
-----I watched an interview where he was amazed so many people wanted to hear him speak. He said he only had about 2-3 sermons that he would tackle from different perspectives.  
-----

That is really sad that he admitted that; and with that, I rest my case.

God bless,  
Lisa

**Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/2/5 9:07**

QUOTE:

"Is it true that Madeine Murray O'hare's son was converted to Christ and is a gospel minister?"

This is true.

I have seen his autobiography in stores. However, I do not know where he is spiritually today, but he did at one point make a profession of faith.

This son's name is William O'Hare. It was him Madelyn used to get prayer outlawed in schools.

The O'Hare family was marked by tragedy after tragedy.

Norma McCorvey's life story is another sad one. However, she also turned to the LORD...a body can never tell - the most wicked person potentially can become your brother or sister in the LORD.

**Re: - posted by Browndl (), on: 2012/2/7 14:51**

Quote:

-----I watched an interview where he was amazed so many people wanted to hear him speak. He said he only had about 2-3 sermons that he would tackle from different perspectives.

That is really sad that he admitted that; and with that, I rest my case.

Why is this sad? I wonder how many varied and different sermons John the Baptist had? Or Jonah? Would it be better for a preacher to preach what God has given him or to multiply words to come up with entertaining variety?

Please do not take this as an affront or rebuke or anything of the sort.

But must we have illustration after illustration to keep us entertained? Or just the plain Word of God given to us line upon line and precept upon precept, again and again, that it might finally sink in and Christ be formed in us?

Jonah 3:2-6 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

**Re: The boy who came back from heaven - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/15 12:14**

The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven- by Malarkey

Heaven is for Real- by Todd Burpo

Could somebody please verify whether these two New York best-seller-list books are urban myths or not? I would like some documentation - not merely your opinions. I have heard opinions already - from a ladies bible study group.

It seems that one of the acceptable literary styles today is writing fiction in a non-fiction format.

I'm looking for some substantial documentation - either way. I don't want the ladies' opinions or my opinions to rule on this matter. That need not be necessary, I believe.

Diane

**Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/2/15 12:29**

Quote:  
-----the most wicked person potentially can become your brother or sister in the LORD.  
-----

The Apostle Paul is a good example.

**Re: , on: 2012/2/15 12:46**

Quote:  
-----The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven- by Malarkey  
-----

I think the author's name says it all: Malarkey

lol...

Krispy

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/15 12:54**

Quote:  
----- I think the author's name says it all: Malarkey  
-----

Names may mean a lot. But I was hoping for something a bit more substantial.

Diane

**Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2012/2/16 9:33**

Quote:  
-----roadsign wrote:  
Heaven is for Real- by Todd Burpo

Could somebody please verify whether these two New York best-seller-list books are urban myths or not? I would like some documentation - not merely your opinions.  
-----

You'd have to read the book to get the documentation because the father (Todd, according to him) is a pastor and while his young son was experiencing death and the next year, he did his best to document it with scripture. Hope that helps. (edit: he started documenting it AFTER the fact, I made it sound like he started from day one and I apologize for that. After his son started revealing things that he saw, he started writing it all down).

God bless,  
Lisa

**Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2012/2/16 10:31**

Quote:

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The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven- by Malarkey

Heaven is for Real- by Todd Burpo  
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I have not read these book and neither do I need to. But a simple test will tell you whether they are true or false. With the X number of mins that they were in Heaven did they see Jesus? Is seeing Jesus for them a big thing or seeing some old testament Prophet or a dead relative in Heaven?

For a true born again believer seeing Jesus will be the only thing that is worth seeing in heaven.

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/2/16 10:33**

Quote:

----- he started documenting it AFTER the fact,  
-----

Thanks Lisa, I read the first chapter online and heard a group of ladies excitedly explain details. I also checked the father's blog. Because of what I see so far, and more significantly, what I DO NOT SEE, I have come to view this as pop Christianity – popular urban legend that is bringing in lots of \$\$\$\$. But, I'd like some more substantial documentation outside of myself – either way.

Many have seen visions down the ages. For some reason, some of them like Joseph Smith's, and now this heaven-experience seem to get enshrined.

Diane

**Re: - posted by Smokey (), on: 2012/2/16 14:08**

I really appreciate that there are preachers like Paul

Washer out there. When I need a lift, it is good to know that anything that I might watch from Paul is good, and solid gospel based teaching. I am just so tired of week after week hearing rambling, amusing stories about the speaker's lives, tied to a momentary tie-in to the "gospel". I can remember hearing visiting evangelists that just regurgitate a sensational message that they spent the year travelling the country with, only to have them back in a year with something completely different. Our commission is very simple.

1Co 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Blessings Greg