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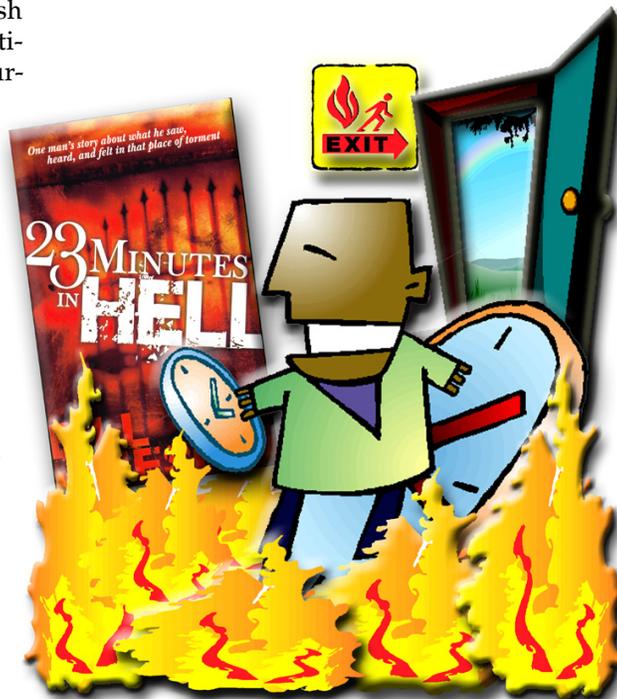
To Hell and Back The Impossible 23-Minute Journey of Bill Wiese

by G. Richard Fisher

A leading purveyor of outlandish "Christian" experiences and fanaticism writes about one woman's purported visit to hell: "Sensationalism fascinates, but it also breeds heresy. Authors who claim to have divine revelations should willingly accept close scrutiny."¹

Yet this same publisher is responsible for the book *23 Minutes in Hell*, written by Bill Wiese.² The back cover introduces Wiese as "a dedicated Christian" and "a successful Realtor." It also says he has taught and led worship, but says nothing about formal biblical training. The front cover says the book is "One man's story about what he saw, heard, and felt in that place of torment."

The book's title itself is suspect. Any systematic theology based on Scripture will develop the teachings of Christ and the apostles, who spoke about the everlasting punishment of hell. One such work reminds us that, "they themselves also taught that doctrine in the most explicit and solemn manner. It is asserted affirma-



tively that future punishment is everlasting; in the negative form that it can never end; that there is in the future world an impassable gulf between the righteous and the wicked; and that there are sins which can never be forgiven ... Our Lord teaches that the punishment of the wicked is everlasting, in the same sense that the blessedness of the saints is everlasting."³

GOING BEYOND WHAT IS WRITTEN

Wiese knows and understands clearly that he has no credible proof for all he is claiming. He says, "I did experience this torment, and you can choose to believe me or not."⁴ The question is: Why should we? Wiese

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