

INTRODUCTION

This morning we will conclude our amazing journey through the twelve chapters of the book of Daniel. The book starts with a young teenager taken captive into Babylon, and ends with an old man, retired from government service, receiving a staggering vision of the end of time.

Last Sunday (April 16, 2000) in the "B.C." comic strip, Johnny Hart devoted his theme to the prophecies of Daniel. In one box, the cavemen are told, "We find old scroll in secret cave" (a copy of Daniel was found as part of the Dead Sea scrolls, by the way). In the next box they say, "Man named Daniel predict exact day Jesus enter holy city." (Remember, we looked at that amazing prophecy in Daniel 9) The cavemen ask, "What Daniel?" The two other men go "ROAR!!!!!" (like lions) And they say, "Oh, THAT Daniel." Even the funny papers recognize the amazing prophecies of Daniel!

Daniel 12 is the conclusion of the long prophecy Daniel began receiving in Chapter 10. In Chapter 10, he received an awesome vision of the glorified Jesus. We learned the object of Bible prophecy is not to tell the future. The purpose of prophecy is to reveal Jesus Christ. Then last week in Chapter 11, we followed the historical outline the angel Gabriel gave Daniel. In the first 35 verses there were predictions about the rise of the Greek Empire and the ongoing battles between Egypt and Syria. There are 135 details in those verses and every one of them has been precisely fulfilled. It was prophecy to Daniel writing in 530 B.C., but it is history to us now. Again, if there is anyone who doesn't think this book is the supernatural word of God, I challenge you to honestly compare the amazing prophecies to how they have been fulfilled in history.

Beginning Daniel 11:36, we traced the career of the final world leader—the Antichrist. In the last verse of that chapter, he is terminated at what the Book of Revelation calls the Battle of Armageddon. But that's not the end of the story. God's plan continues into eternity. Just as the book of Revelation concludes with a wonderful doxology of praise, so does the book of Daniel.

Daniel 12:8-9. "I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, 'My Lord, what will the outcome of all this be?' He replied, 'Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.'"

That means the answer to Daniel's question won't be fully understood until the end of time. During the terrible persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C., when he killed the Jews and polluted the temple—the Jews circulated the book of Daniel and read it to find courage to stay faithful to God. Finally in December 164 B.C., they reclaimed and rededicated the Temple (that's what Hanukkah is all about). In the same way, in the future, during a time of terrible tribulation at the end of time, faithful followers of God will once again read the book of Daniel and it will make more sense to them than it even does to us! Wow! That's the power of the Word of God.

In our fast-paced society, sometimes people just want to get to "the bottom line." We have coined a lot of phrases to describe this. We say, "Get rid of the fluff; cut-to-the-chase; don't beat around the bush; just give it to me straight!" Or as Joe Friday used to say on the TV show

“Dragnet,” “Just the facts, Ma’am.” We aren’t going to look at facts; we are going to look at truth.

I want us to extract five bottom-line truths from the Word of God. Then I want each of us to ask ourselves a personal question relating to each truth. There is a difference between facts and truth. They aren’t the same. For instance, $2 + 2 = 4$ is a fact, but it doesn’t change your life. When Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, the life...” That is truth that can transform your life. George Washington was the first U.S. President—that’s a fact. But it won’t transform your life. The Bible says, “If you confess with your mouth ‘Jesus is Lord’ and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Now that’s truth that can revolutionize your existence.

Let’s begin reading in verse one: “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people will arise (remember, Michael is the archangel. The Bible says when Jesus comes to rapture the church it will be announced by the shout of the archangel—I Thessalonians 4:16—Michael is the angel who seems to be assigned to protect Israel). There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. (We learned last week this “time of distress” is the 7-year tribulation that will take place after the rapture of the church). But at that time your people (Israel)—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.”

**1. GOD’S TRUTH: THERE IS A BOOK OF LIFE (12:1)
MY RESPONSE: IS MY NAME WRITTEN IN IT?**

Several times in the Bible we are told there is a book in heaven containing names of certain people. God deals with us as individuals. Your name, your individual life, is important to God. Maybe you’ve had your name on certain lists here on earth. In a few days, there will be a lot of high school seniors who will have their name on a graduation list. You may be on the list of “who’s who” or you may be on the list of “who’s not?” Your name might be on the membership list of clubs or organizations. You might even have your name on the list of members of Green Acres Baptist Church or some other list. But the only list of names that matters for eternity is in the book of life God keeps. The Bible says God has written the names of His children, chosen in Christ before the creation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4) Can a person know his or her name is in that book? Certainly! Jesus said: “Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20) There is also a pretty stiff penalty if your name is NOT found written there. These words appear in the book of Revelation in the description of the final judgment. “If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:15)

Your concern today ought to be: Is my name written in it? First, let me tell you this list in heaven doesn’t coincide with any church membership list. I’m afraid churches offer a false sense of security if they communicate church membership is synonymous with salvation.

I recall visiting a neighboring pastor years ago when I was in my 20s and I happened to see a membership list for his church on his desk. Beside several of the names on each page he had written the letters FBPO. I asked him, “What does FBPO stand for?” He said, “Oh, that stands for ‘For Burial Purposes Only’ . Those are people whose names are on our roll, but they seldom

attend or give and hardly ever serve the Lord. I figure the only reason they are a member of this church is so when they die, their obituary can read they were a member of this church.” Ouch. I’ve never forgotten that. Actually, it’s not our job to decide who is truly saved, or not—that’s God’s job. But based upon what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, there are multitudes of religious people whose names are written in any number of man’s books whose names aren’t written in God’s book. You ask, “How then can I be *sure* my name is written in the book of life?” Simple. Do you know Jesus? In Matthew 7:23, Jesus rejects some religious talking people because He says, “I never knew you.” Do you know Jesus?

I’m not asking if you know about Jesus. To use my earlier analogy, all of us know about George Washington but none of us know him. In this room today everyone knows about Jesus but do you know Him? I do. I met Him years ago, and my life has never been the same. I talk to Him almost constantly every day. He speaks to me through His Word. We have a great relationship.

That’s how you can be certain that your name is in God’s book. Now look down at verse 2 to see the second bottom line truth: “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”

2. GOD’S TRUTH: THERE ARE TWO FUTURE RESURRECTIONS (12:2) MY RESPONSE: WHICH ONE WILL BE MINE?

Let’s see what else the Bible says about this: “A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.” (John 5:28-29) “Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them.” (Revelation 20:6)

During Easter, we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus. While it is a historical fact, the truth of Jesus’ resurrection must be understood. None of us is going to live in this body forever. These bodies are temporary and they get old and sick, and they finally stop. We die. You can exercise, eat properly, tuck it, lift it, move it, or groove it but the most you can hope for will be a few more years. But death is not the end. Our souls live on. And even one day, there will be a resurrection of our bodies. Actually, the Bible says there will be two resurrections. (Read Revelation 20 to learn more.)

Those who know Jesus, whose names are written in the book of Life, will be resurrected to eternal life. We will live with Jesus forever. But the Bible never teaches Universalism, the doctrine that one day everyone will be saved. Universalism teaches that sometime in the future, God will change His mind, and say, “I know what I said, but hey, I’m a God of mercy. All of you come on into heaven.”

Throughout the Bible we are taught there are two and only two eternal destinies. The Bible calls it heaven and hell. Daniel says some will be resurrected to eternal life and some to eternal shame and contempt.

Hell is called the second death. Physical death is the “first death” and eternal separation from God is called the “second death.” There are two births and two deaths in the Bible. There is a

physical birth and Jesus said in John 3 that, "you must be born again." He is talking about a spiritual birth. Even so, there are two deaths. Now maybe you've never considered this, but let me make it simple: "If you are born once, you'll die twice. But if you are born twice, you'll only die once." If you are born once (physically) and then you are never born again (spiritually), that is you spend your entire life without ever knowing Jesus, you will die twice. The first time will be physical death and then in the future your body will be resurrected to go through eternal death (that's the second one.). But God loves you and has taken extraordinary measures to let you know that He doesn't desire for that to happen to you. It may be exactly why He brought to you this place to read this message. If you are born twice (physically and spiritually)—you will only die once (physically) and the "second death" will never touch you.

Let's look at the third truth found in verse 3: "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever."

3. GOD'S TRUTH: REAL "STARS" ARE THOSE WHO SHINE FOR JESUS (12:3) MY RESPONSE: AM I LEADING OTHERS TO CHRIST?

This verse contains an amazing truth that should thrill us. Who are the "stars" of our modern culture? Go out on the street and ask that question and you'll hear names of people who are movie stars, or rock stars, or sports stars, the people who are pictured in *People Magazine*. Just a few weeks ago, the stars gathered for the annual Academy Awards. I was in Israel and I'm so sorry I missed it. Every year, people line the streets to catch a glimpse of these stars. They want to see what they are wearing, who they are with and how they have fixed their hair. These people are called stargazers. Even the best sports celebrities are called All-Stars.

Did you know God tells us here the kind of people who are His stars? He says when you lead someone to righteousness—that's Jesus—God considers you a star that will shine forever and ever! Are you a star? You may never have your face on *People Magazine* or even in the *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, but if you are actively leading others to righteousness, God says you are a star and you are special to Him. You may do it by teaching children in Sunday School; you may do it by sharing your faith with your co-workers. Many of our teenagers were stars this week because they brought their friends to Wired Week to find Jesus.

Most of us learned the nursery rhyme: "Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are. Up above the world so high, like a diamond in the sky..." Of course we know stars are actually not little at all. They are huge gaseous balls burning at incredible temperatures. Some are so far away it takes many years for their light to reach us. But to us, the stars in the sky keep on shining and while some Christians may come across as incredibly hot bags of gas, we are just keep on shining faithfully—giving direction to people who are lost—just like the stars have always done.

The Apostle Paul says we are to do the same thing in the New Testament. He writes: "Children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life." (Philippians 2: 15-16) I've been excited for our teenagers this week, because so many of them are talking to their friends about coming to Jesus. Good for you! Every time you do you become the real "stars" among us! It is the job of every Christian to point people to Jesus. When you stop and think about it, we are to share Jesus with

others in the same way that the stars shine. Let me give you three ways in which sharing Christ and stars are alike.

(1) Stars shine only when it's dark. Well, we know stars actually shine during the day also, but nobody can see their light because of the brightness of our sun. When do you need to let your light shine for Jesus? Wherever there is spiritual darkness. It's easy to let your light shine here at church when you are gathered with thousands of brothers and sisters but you need to let your light shine at school, at work, at your home, in your neighborhood, wherever there is darkness.

(2) Stars shine modestly but faithfully. You never have to be obnoxious or rude when you shine for Jesus. You don't have to be the loudmouth who is always hitting somebody over the head with a 10-pound Bible. Like the stars, just shine—modestly but faithfully—day after day.

(3) Stars shine to give direction. For thousands of years, mariners and other explorers depended on the stars for navigation. Before the advent of sophisticated satellite navigation, a sailor looked for either the North Star (in the northern hemisphere) or the Southern Cross (in the southern hemisphere). They took a bearing on those stars and then know they were going in the right direction. That's the way we ought to be. It's great for us to wear the bracelets and ask the questions "WWJD?" But most people without Jesus aren't looking at Jesus; they are looking at US! Our lives should be like the North Star, which constantly and consistently directs people to God.

So we are to be God's stars in this misguided and perverse generation. There is one big difference between you and the stars shining in the sky. Daniel 12:3 says we will "shine forever!" It doesn't just say "forever," it says "forever and forever." All the stars in the sky, including our own sun will one day burn out. They will be snuffed out like a candle. But when you are one of God's stars shining forever, you will outshine the sun and the moon and the stars! Are you letting your light shine for Jesus, leading others to Christ?

4. GOD'S TRUTH: AN EXPLOSION OF INFORMATION WILL CHARACTERIZE THE LAST DAYS (12:4)
MY RESPONSE: AM I RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS?

Daniel is given an amazing statement in verse 4: "But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there (that speaks of transportation) to increase knowledge (that speaks of information)." What will characterize the "time of the end?" Daniel is told we can expect an improvement in transportation and an explosion of information.

Isaac Newton is often called the father of modern physics. He was a committed Christian, and perhaps the first scientist to see God's hand in the orderly design of the universe. Harold Wilmington writes that in 1680, Sir Isaac Newton read these words in Daniel and said, "Personally, I cannot help but believe that these words refer to the end of the times. Men will travel from country to country in an unprecedented manner. There may be some inventions which will enable people to travel much more quickly than they do now." Sir Isaac Newton went on to suggest that this speed might exceed 50 miles per hour! Some years later, the French atheist, Voltaire, read these words of Isaac Newton and scoffed, "See what a fool Christianity

makes of an otherwise brilliant man! Here a scientist like Newton actually writes that men may travel at the rate of forty to fifty miles per hour. Has he forgotten that if a man would travel at this rate he would be suffocated? His heart would stand still!” (Harold Willmington, *Basic Stages in the Book of Ages*, p. 375)

How interesting. As you and I know, today Space Shuttle astronauts travel at speeds in excess of 18,000 miles per hour. Daniel was right and Isaac Newton was on the right track in understanding what Daniel was saying. From Daniel’s time up until just over 100 years ago, the fastest a man could travel was on horseback, a peak speed of 30 mph (for short bursts only). During the past 150 years, we’ve witnessed the advent of the train, the automobile, the jet, and spacecraft. Today you can fly from New York to Paris in three hours.

But what about the information explosion? Just as the Industrial Age revolutionized the world, the current Information Age is creating changes faster than we can imagine. When I was in college, I bought a set of encyclopedias that weighs about 70 pounds and takes up an entire bookcase. Today, an encyclopedia fits on a CD-ROM that weighs a few grams. The last time I counted the books in my personal library I had well over 1,000 volumes. They are scattered from my study at home, to my office here, to out at the lake property. I don’t have a room big enough for them. Several times as I’ve moved I’ve boxed them and unboxed them. It’s pretty amazing to think that my entire library can now be stored on a couple of discs in my Zip drive.

Never before has so much information been made available to so many people. As I was researching a topic for this message on the Internet, I typed the topic into the search engine and I got a response that there were 877 links to sites on that topic. While there is plenty of junk out there, there is plenty of good information, too. Every week thousands of people access our web site to learn about our church, or to read my sermons. A week never passes that I don’t get an email from somebody in another state who read a message I preached a year ago, and God used it to minister to him or her.

Today, people don’t even need a desktop or a laptop to access cyber-information. Now they get it on Palm Pilot much smaller than your Bible and soon it will be as small as a wristwatch. Computers run everything today. The four most dreaded words in business today are “our servers are down.” When that happens, most offices have to shut down.

The amount of information and knowledge is increasing exponentially, that means it is like a number squared rather than a number multiplied. Someone observed from the time Jesus died until the year 1700 knowledge doubled. It took 1700 years! But then by 1900, after only 200 years, knowledge doubled again. By 1950 technological information had doubled again, in only fifty years. Then by 1970, there was another doubling—20 years—until now. It is doubling every two years and if some of the predictions of quantum physics come true, it could double in one day sometime in the near future.

Don’t let that scare you. To me, it just shows the Bible is true and we really are moving into the last days. While man has advanced into the Information Age, our culture is still morally bankrupt. In 1948, after we had dropped the atom bombs in WWII, General Omar Bradley spoke to an audience of scientists in Boston. Although he spoke these words over 50 years ago, I think

they are still true: "We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount...With the monstrous weapons man already has, humanity is in danger of being trapped in this world by moral adolescents. Our knowledge of science has already outstripped our capacity to control it. We have too many men of science, too few men of God." (*NY Public Library of 20th Century American Quotations*, p. 367)

What should we do? Look at the words of Jesus: "Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door...So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." (Matthew 24:33, 44). As I have said many times, we aren't to set dates or try to figure out the timetable of His coming. Jesus has commanded us to be faithful to Him, to worship Him, to serve Him by lovingly sharing His message with those around us. And we are to be more faithful to do this as we see the Day approaching.

As we come to the conclusion of Daniel's prophecy he asks the question we read at the beginning of this message: "What will the outcome of all this be?" (12:8) He is told to just "go his way." That means to keep on doing what's he's always done, to pray, to serve, to worship.

The angel says the true application of this final portion of the prophecy is sealed up until the end of time. Look at the text beginning in verse 10. This is pretty amazing: "Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand." That means toward the end of time, the wicked will get even more wicked (we are certainly seeing that in America) but at the same time there will be many who are purified and made spotless. That means we are going to see a dual revival in the last days. God's people are going to get more and more fired up for Jesus. We are going to see a remarkable spiritual awakening in the church but there is going to be a parallel increase in wickedness and sin. To me that means that as we approach the return of Christ, the so-called "middle ground" is going to shrink to nothing.

Some of you think you can live with one foot in the world and with one foot in the kingdom of Jesus. You have two lifestyles, one for church and one for the rest of the time. As we get closer to the end, this option will disappear, like a boat drifting away, and you have one foot on the dock and one foot in the boat, you are going to have to decide: Jesus or this world? The boat is moving away, and if you don't decide—splash!—you end up all wet! What will it be for you?

Then in verse 11 and 12 Daniel is given some kind of "final answer." "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up there will be 1,290 days." Remember, after Jesus comes to rapture the church, the last 3-1/2 years of the reign of the Antichrist will be a time when he does something so horrible (an abomination) that the Jewish temple (which is going to be rebuilt) will once again be deserted (desolate) by the faithful Jews. Actually 1,290 days is *exactly* 3-1/2 years *plus* 30 days. What does it mean? You may not be ready for my answer. What does it mean? I don't know. I believe this will not make any sense until this happens during the Great Tribulation and only then will God's faithful followers read this verse and understand what it means. The same is true for verse 12: "Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days." This is an additional 45 days. Again, I believe in the future, when God's people are under terrible persecution, they will read those two verses and gain great strength. They will be able to match those words with what Antichrist has done

and they will be able to encourage each other by saying, "Just 30 more days...just 45 more days.. hang in there, be faithful!" That's what the angel means when he says that the words of this prophecy are "sealed up" until the end of time. Isn't that amazing?

God gives a personal word to old Daniel. Picture this faithful saint of God, probably in his 90s at this time, still on fire for God, praying and serving His Lord. Here is God's final truth to Daniel in verse 12: "As for you, go your way till the end (that means just keep on doing what you've been doing until you die). You will rest, and then at the end of the days (end of the world) you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance." Here's God's final truth:

**5. GOD'S TRUTH: THERE IS A REST AND A REWARD FOR GOD'S CHILDREN
(12:13)**

MY RESPONSE: DO I HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

We don't know exactly when Daniel died, but it was probably soon after he received this final prophecy. But he lived his final days with the great assurance that God promised him rest and an inheritance.

How much longer do you have to live? You don't know the answer to that question but you should know the answer to this next one: Will you live the rest of your life with the assurance that when you die you will spend eternity in heaven with Jesus? Daniel enjoyed a personal relationship with God. He wasn't just the participant in some religion. He knew God. He spoke to God every day and God spoke to him. Today, I'm not asking you if you are a religious person, I'm asking you—do you know God? Do you have a personal relationship with Him? I'm not asking you if you believe in God. I'm asking you if God is real to you. If you know God, this is the future promise you can claim: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for deeds will follow them." (Revelation 13:14)

The old song says, "There's a land that is fairer than day; and by faith I shall see it some day. For the Father waits over the way, to prepare me a dwelling place there. In the sweet by-and-by we shall meet on that beautiful shore; in the sweet-by-and-by we shall meet on that beautiful shore."

The Book of Daniel has been a great study for us but if you've only been informed without being transformed, this study has been wasted. For those of you who know Jesus, I pray your faith has been strengthened and you have a deeper dependence on the power and providence of God. If you don't know the Lord, this study is intended to draw you into God's loving arms of mercy.

CONCLUSION

I recently read a story about a lady named Edith Burns. I'm not sure if it's a true story or not, but it's a great story and I've known plenty of people like Edith Burns. She was a wonderful Christian widow who lived in San Antonio, Texas. She was the patient of a Christian doctor named Will Phillips. Dr. Phillips is the one who supposedly tells the story. Edith was one of his favorite patients.

One morning he went to his office with a heavy heart and it was because of Edith Burns. When he walked into that waiting room, there sat Edith with her big black Bible in her lap. She was earnestly talking to a young mother sitting beside her. Dr. Phillips knew why Edith was there and what she was doing. Edith Burns had a habit of introducing herself in this way: "Hello, my name is Edith Burns. Do you believe in Easter?" Then she would explain the meaning of Easter, and many times people would accept Christ.

In fact, several months earlier Edith had met Dr. Phillips' nurse, Beverly. As Beverly was taking her blood pressure, Edith began by saying, "My name is Edith Burns. Do you believe in Easter?" "Why yes I do." "Well, what do you believe about Easter?" "Well, it's all about egg hunts, going to church, and dressing up." Beverly said. That allowed Edith to share with Beverly about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and as a result, Beverly had become a Christian.

On this morning, when Edith entered the examination room she looked at Dr. Phillips and knew something was wrong. She said, "Dr. Will, why are you so sad? Are you reading your Bible? Are you praying?" Dr. Phillips said, "Now Edith, I'm the doctor and you're the patient." With a heavy heart he said, "Your lab report came back and it says you have an aggressive form of cancer, and Edith, you may not live very long."

Edith said, "Why Will Phillips, shame on you. Why are you so sad? Do you think God makes mistakes? You have just told me I'm going to see my precious Lord Jesus, my husband, and my friends. You have just told me that I am going to celebrate Easter forever, and here you are having difficulty giving me my ticket!" Dr. Phillips thought to himself, "What a magnificent woman this Edith Burns is!"

In a few months, it was obvious the chemo was not keeping up with the spread of the cancer, so Edith was moved to the hospital. While there she continued to meet staff and patients by saying, "My name is Edith Burns, do you believe in Easter?" Many of her fellow patients accepted Christ. She soon became known as "Edith Easter" on that floor.

Everyone seemed to be inspired by Edith's faith except for Phyllis Cross, the head nurse. She made it plain she wanted nothing to do with Edith, because she was a "religious nut." She had been a nurse in an army hospital. She had seen it all and heard it all. She was the original G.I. Jane. She had been married three times. She was hard, cold, and did everything by the book.

One morning the two nurses who were to attend to Edith were sick. Edith had the flu and Phyllis Cross had to go in and give her a shot. When she walked in, Edith had a big smile on her face and said, "Phyllis, God loves you and I love you, and I have been praying for you." Phyllis Cross said, "Well, you can quit praying for me, you religious nut, it won't work. I'm not interested." Edith said, "Well, I will pray and I have asked God not to let me go home until you come into the family." Phyllis Cross said, "Then you will never die because that will never happen." She walked out of the room.

Every day Phyllis Cross walked into that room and Edith said, "God loves you Phyllis and I love you, and I'm praying for you."

After working with Edith for a few days, Phyllis asked her, "Edith, you have asked everybody here the question, 'Do you believe in Easter?' but you have never asked me." Edith said, "Phyllis, I wanted to many times, but God told me to wait until you asked, and now that you have asked..." Edith Burns took her Bible and shared with Phyllis Cross the Easter Story of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Edith said, "Phyllis, do you believe in Easter? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is alive and that He wants to live in your heart?" Phyllis Cross said, "Oh I want to believe that with all of my heart, and I do want Jesus in my life." Right there, Phyllis Cross prayed and invited Jesus Christ into her heart. For the first time Phyllis Cross did not walk out of a hospital room, she was carried out on the wings of angels.

Two days later, Phyllis Cross came in and Edith said, "Do you know what day it is?" Phyllis Cross said, "Why Edith, it's Good Friday." Edith said, "Oh, no, for you every day is Easter. Happy Easter Phyllis!" Two days later, on Easter Sunday, Phyllis Cross came into work, did some of her duties and then went down to the flower shop and got some Easter lilies because she wanted to go up to see Edith and give her some Easter lilies and wish her a Happy Easter. When she walked into Edith's room, Edith was in bed. That big black Bible was on her lap. Her hands were in that Bible. There was a sweet smile on her face. When Phyllis Cross went to pick up Edith's hand, she realized Edith was dead.

Her left hand was on John 14: "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." Her right hand was on Revelation 21:4, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Phyllis Cross took one look at that dead body, and then lifted her face toward heaven, and with tears streaming down here cheeks, said, "Happy Easter, Edith, Happy Easter!"

Well, Phyllis Cross left Edith's body, walked out of the room, and over to a table where two student nurses were sitting. She said, "My name is Phyllis Cross. Do you believe in Easter?"

OUTLINE

1. GOD'S TRUTH: THERE IS A BOOK OF LIFE (1) MY RESPONSE: IS MY NAME WRITTEN IN IT?

"Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to, but rejoice that your names are written heaven." *Luke 10:20*

If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. *Revelation 20:15*

2. GOD'S TRUTH: THERE ARE TWO FUTURE RESURRECTIONS (2) MY RESPONSE: WHICH ONE WILL BE MINE?

"... A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." *John 5:28-29*

Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them. *Revelation 20:6a*

3. GOD'S TRUTH: REAL "STARS" ARE THOSE WHO SHINE FOR JESUS. (3) MY RESPONSE: AM I LEADING OTHERS TO CHRIST?

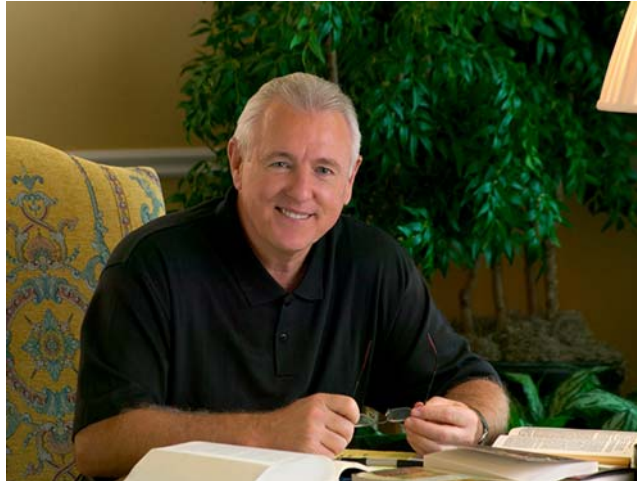
... children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life. *Philippians 2:15-16a*

4. GOD'S TRUTH: AN EXPLOSION OF INFORMATION WILL CHARACTERIZE THE LAST DAYS (4) MY RESPONSE: AM I RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS?

"Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door ... So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." *Matthew 24:33, 44*

5. GOD'S TRUTH: THERE IS A REST AND A REWARD FOR GOD'S CHILDREN. (13) MY RESPONSE: DO I HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."
"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." *Revelation 14:13*



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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes