

Daniel 06-06-04b

Let's resume our study now, we're in Daniel chapter 12 verse 1 and we're looking specifically at the book that is opened and there are individuals written in that book. As I have pointed out, there are over 20 references in scripture to books in heaven. Some of these seem to refer to deeds and events, others refer to individuals that fall into various categories.

Only one of these books seems to be in view specifically related to who's saved and who's not and this is the one that is found in Revelation chapter 20. So what are these other books and should we be concerned? Do we need to know what is going on with the books or should we just blithely and glibly roll along and just not worry about it? Well, if there are 20 something references to something in scripture, then it's probably a subject to which we should pay attention. So that's what we're doing.

We're taking a look at these and figuring out what the different passages refer to. First of all, when you look at the first reference, Exodus 32, 32, Moses talking about being blotted out of the book, this is not, I think, although people will make a case and you can make up your own mind on this, I don't think Moses standing on Sinai talking to God and God says stand back Moses, I'm going to obliterate this people, I'll start over with you. I don't think he is saying, well, if you're going to kill them, kill me also.

That would have been a much simpler thing to say. He could have simply said, well, before you wipe them out, let me walk down and join them and you can wipe us all out together. But Moses specifically makes this reference to God's book and he says, yet now, if you will forgive their sin, but if not, I pray blot me out of your book, which you have written.

And as we have seen so many times, there is a concept of righteousness or lack thereof associated with this writing that Moses refers to and says, I have been written in your book, blot me out if you're not going to forgive their sin. That is the gist of what he's communicating. Well, look at what is being offered to Moses on that occasion.

God says this people have tried my patience to the limit and I'm sick of them. And what does he tell Moses earlier? Moses returns to the Lord and says, oh, these people have committed a great sin and have made for themselves a God of gold. Yet now, if you will forgive their sin, but if not, I pray blot me out of your book, which you've written, the Lord says, whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book.

But this is the second conversation. Because the first conversation with God, God says, I'm going to destroy this people and I will make a new nation out of you. And this is earlier in the chapter.

This is verse nine. The Lord said to Moses, I have seen this people. And indeed, it is a stiff necked people, which is a synonym for stubborn.

But do you remember our study of stiff necked? It doesn't really mean stiff necked, does it? It means those who show the neck, who present the neck. And this has been interpreted as stiff necked, but that's not what it means. And it doesn't mean that they won't turn their head.

What it means is they're showing you their neck. When's the only time when you've got men walking around in long flowing beards, when's the only time you can see their neck? It's when they're going away. It reminds you of Jesus talking about don't cast your pearls before swine.

Because he says, if you do, they will turn and tear you to pieces. Why do they have to turn to tear you to pieces? Because the swine are going away. And you're throwing the pearls beyond them saying, hey, wait a minute, wait a minute.

Look at these pearls and the swine. They've already turned away and they're leaving. And you're trying to entice a pig back with pearls that he has no regard for.

He turns, he gets irritated because they're bouncing off his skull or something. And he turns to tear you to pieces. That's that that hog is showing you his neck.

And anytime you see the term stiff necked in the Old Testament is talking about those who show the neck, i.e. they have turned diametrically 180 degrees away from you and they're departing. That's stiff necked. So God says here, get down, go, your people whom you brought, and God says, your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.

They've turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have turned aside quickly out of the way. The way that God commanded them is the way that leads to himself, isn't it? If they turned aside from it, what have they done? They've, they're showing the neck.

They have made themselves a molded calf, worshiped it, sacrificed to it, said, this is your God, O Israel. The Lord says, I have seen this people and it is a people who shows the neck. They keep turning away from me.

Now, therefore, let me alone that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them and I will make of you a great nation. You will be the new Abraham. People won't any longer say, oh, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

They'll say Moses. Moses is our father. Moses is the, is the progenitor of our nation.

And this would go back really to the Noah model, wouldn't it? Everyone's sons at Adam's, then you cut them off. And now everyone is a son of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth. But Moses pleaded with the Lord is God and said, Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt? And he reverses what God said.

God says, it's your people that you brought out of the land of Egypt. Moses says, why have you turned against your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt? And that the people of

Israel here are like a hot potato. God tosses it to Moses.

Moses tosses it right back. Why should the Egyptians speak and say he brought them out? Now, if God was seriously going to wipe out the people, what would have happened? Would he be having this dialogue with Moses? He would say, go down and view the carcasses of the people that I have wiped out for their sin. And I'm going to make a great nation out of you.

And it would be a fait accompli. But God tells Moses, he says, let me alone that I may go do this. Well, he's this is a prompt.

This is a statement to provoke a response from Moses. And God does it on purpose. And in one sense, God has no intention of wiping out all the people of Israel, all the 12 tribes to which he has already made promises about which he has already made prophetic utterance through their father, Jacob, if you remember.

And he has made them covenant promises, but this appearance of imminent destruction is something God creates verbally, much the way that we encounter circumstances in our life that seem to suggest that disaster is imminent or calamity is imminent or something awful is about to take place. If we know God, if we trust his promises, if we understand who we are and why we're here in Christ, then these things are not going to alarm us. And the appearance of imminent destruction or the appearance of great calamity will not throw us off stride.

Moses, this is one of the toughest tests anybody ever faced, because on the one hand, God says, I'm going to make you the new Abraham. And on the other hand, he says Moses was the most afflicted man that ever lived. Remember that? The people tried his patience.

They wore him out. He got so frustrated with him. And here's a chance to get out of that.

Would Moses have problem with the people if they're all descended from him? You've got the strong patriarchal society, patriarchal society. And if it's his sons and grandsons and great grandsons, he's going to have a new amount of leverage instead of these people who say, you're from the Egyptian palace. You haven't been in the trenches stomping bricks with us.

You don't know what it's like to be oppressed and afflicted. You don't have the credibility to lead us. You don't have the authority to lead us.

Has God spoken only to you? Remember the arguments they came up with? And Moses is only leading to the extent that people recognize that God has designated him as their leader. He doesn't really, I mean, they've eschewed and rejected Egypt. And Moses, in many ways, sort of represents Egypt to them.

He was a prince of Egypt. He's a pharaoh's daughter. And they're saying, well, you were born with a silver lotus leaf in your mouth or something.

And I don't think they used spoons back then. But you've got all of these privileges. You haven't

been down in the trenches with us.

And so look at the argument that God makes here. Hey, start over with you. I'll make a great nation out of you.

Everybody's going to look up to you. They have to, because you gave birth to them all. You'll be the patriarch.

And so stand aside and let me do this thing. So on the one hand, he's offered this great plum of being the new father of the nation. And he's going to get rid of this itching, scratching, abrasive, ongoing, never ending, irritating problem of the people of Israel.

But Moses is thinking about God and thinking about God's plan and purpose and thinking about God's word. And what does he say? He pleads with the Lord. He says, Lord, why does your wrath burn? Why should the Egyptians speak and say he brought them out to harm them, kill them in the mountains and consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from your fierce wrath, he says.

And relent from this harm to your people. And here's Moses reminding God. Moses says to God, remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self.

This is such a great model for prayer when we see things and they don't seem to be shaping up. And we can say to God, we remind God of his promises. We say, I am claiming your promise.

I am trusting your word. You have said, if I ask, it will be given. If I seek, it will be found.

And if I knock, you will open the door. So this situation I'm having trouble resolving, this part of your word that I'm having a hard time understanding, this area where I have to make a decision, I have to make a choice. I have to implement a policy.

I have to set a priority. I have to set a goal. I don't see it clearly.

Lord, you have promised. This ought to be a big component of our prayer is reminding God of what he has promised and what he has said, because many times that's what he's waiting for, is for us to bring to him that very promise, that very part of his word, because we've cycled it through and we're making application. And that's what he's waiting for.

And that's what God does with Moses here. You said, Lord, you swore by your own self and said, I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven. How can you wipe these people out when you have said, I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and all this land I give to your descendants and they will inherit it forever.

And God relented, the Lord relented from the harm which he said he would do to his people. Well, Moses still returns for that second conversation. We went through this in detail in Exodus and he comes back up and he says, these people have committed a great sin.

They've made for themselves a god of gold. Yet now, if you will forgive their sin, but if not, I pray blot me out of your book, which you have written, because their lives have been spared. The Lord relented from the harm that he was going to do them.

Well, that gets them out of the punishment phase, that gets them out of the loss of life phase. But what will they do now that they're still alive? Just wander aimlessly in the wilderness? What about the positive side of God's promise, the fulfillment of blessing and prosperity and living in the land and so on? And if you will forgive their sin, somebody can be alive and be unforgiven. Somebody can have escaped the penalty of an action, but not be restored, not be in line for any sort of benefit.

So the second argument is an argument for restoration of benefit and of blessing. And that's the contrast Moses makes. The first offer was, I'm going to take their life.

And Moses says, no, you can't. Now what's hanging in the balance is, will God still fulfill his promises to them despite this great disobedience and their breaking of his covenant? And so Moses says, if you're not going to forgive their sin, if you're not going to lead this people into the land, then blot me out of your book. And what is on the line here is blessing and reward.

And what is written in the book for Moses, this is the book of the righteous. This is the book of the fear of God. This is the book where Moses' blessing and Moses' future prosperity is recorded because Moses has been a man of faith.

Moses has faced down the Pharaoh and his magicians. Moses has done his time, 40 years in Midian. Moses has faithfully followed God's command.

And he's got a lot of credit in God's book in terms of future blessing, future reward. And what he's saying here is, if you're not going to forgive them, kill me. He's saying, if you're not going to forgive them, then I will share their lot of a futureless, hopeless wandering with no blessing and no peace and no prosperity in the offing.

Blot me out of your book as well. So God says, no, whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book. Now, everybody sins, so everybody would get blotted out.

But there is provision and there has been ever since man left the garden. There is animal sacrifice and there is the covering over of sin. And that sin is not accounted where there is no law.

Paul points this out in Romans. And those who are accountable for sin are those who refuse God's provision to cover or to remediate that sin. And David commits grievous sins later on in history.

He's going to murder Uriah. He's going to have adultery with Bathsheba. He's going to number the people.

He's going to do all kinds of bad things. And he's going to go down there getting ready to slaughter Abigail's husband, Nabal, the fool. And he's only stopped by her intervention.

And he has this anger and this murderous intent. And that's a sin. But David can still say in the Psalms, I stand before God in my integrity and in my spotless purity.

Why? He's not a man who has never sinned. He is a man who is not still on the books with sin, because that has been covered over. That has been set aside.

So whoever has sinned against me, this is unacknowledged, unremediated sin. God says, I will blot him out of my book. And these are your reprobates.

What kind of book are they blotted out of? The book of reward, the book of the righteous, the book of those who are in line for privilege and prosperity, both in time and in eternity. So what's the conclusion we draw from this? What's the conclusion we draw? One of the major books that we see in the Old Testament is the book of the covenant participators, those who qualify for the fulfillment of God's covenant promises. God promised the land, God promised the king, God promised the vine and the fig tree and so on in the Old Testament.

We know that of the resurrected Israelites, some are going to inherit that and some are not. Some will be in the land and some will not. In Ezekiel, they're going to pass under the rod.

Jesus told the Pharisees, many are going to come down and sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You're going to be cast out. You have to be there to be cast out.

So they're resurrected, but they're going to be out in Gentileville. They're going to be out in non-Jewish land. They're going to be out living among the hoi polloi, the people that they've looked down on and cast aspersions on all their life.

Well, they're going to be out there in the goyim slums and many of the Lazaruses are going to be in with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So there is this division and those who are qualified to go in the land, there are gatekeepers at the borders of millennial Israel. There are gatekeepers at the borders of millennial Jerusalem, just as there will be in the new Jerusalem.

How do they know who's allowed in and who's not? Well, this is the equivalent of a book, the book of the righteous, the book of the qualified, the book of those who are privileged by God's grace and by laying hold of God's grace and washing their robes and so on of going in. This is for Israel. That's what Moses is talking about in Exodus chapter 32.

Life and death are off the table now. That was settled in the first conversation. Now it is blessing.

Now it is what are you going to do with this people whose lives you have spared? Well, Psalm 69, verse 28, where David is talking about his enemies. He says, reproach has broken my heart. In verse 20, I am full of heaviness.

I look for someone to take pity on me. There isn't anyone. I look for comforters.

There aren't any. They give me gall for my food and for my thirst. They give me vinegar to drink.

You know what that foreshadows? Let their table become a snare for them and their well-being a trap. Let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see. Make their loins shake continually.

Pour out your indignation upon them and let your wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their dwelling place be desolate. Let no one live in their tents for they persecuted the one you have struck.

This is like the Moabites and the Ammonites and the Edomites. When God brings discipline on Israel, they say, aha, and they come in and they add their persecution and they pile on. Here's God doing discipline and they just are shooting out the lip and pointing the finger and so on.

They persecute the one you have struck. They talk of the grief of those you have wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity and let them not come into your righteousness.

Do you hear that? Verse 27, add iniquity to their iniquity. Write down what they're doing. In the roster, in the register of their iniquity, add iniquity to their iniquity and let them not come into your righteousness.

The book of the righteous. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living and not be written with the righteous. Now, lots of righteous that are dead, Enoch, on down, you have the righteous that are dead.

But the book of the living here, I don't think this is David praying for someone's physical death. This is living in the sense of the fruitful branch. Jesus says, I'm the vine, you are the branches.

Abide in me and you will bear much fruit. If you don't abide in the vine, you're dry and shriveled. The father is going to prune that branch and it's going to be gathered in bundles and burned.

This does not always mean physical death, does it? In fact, very seldom does it mean physical death. It means that when God looks at the tree of righteousness, righteousness flows from the vine into the branches and produces this fruit of righteousness. If you're not plugged into the righteousness of Christ, you're a dead branch.

You're dead in trespasses and sins. You have no righteousness flowing in and through you and producing this fruit. And those branches are snapped off, gathered in bundles and burned.

And this is the fruit of the life. This is the wood, hay and stubble. It has no direct relationship to, are you alive and walking around on the planet or not? So I would submit to you, I would suggest to you that Psalm 69, verse 28, when David says, let them be blotted out of the book of the living.

This is God's roster of the righteous. Here are the people and their faith, their righteousness by faith. These people aren't doing that because they are persecuting God's righteous people.

And they're talking about the grief of those that God has wounded. So let them not be written with the righteous. This matches what we find in the New Testament, like our Philippians chapter four passage where Paul says, I urge you true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel.

I promise you virtually every reference, if you look up the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, if you look up a Bible dictionary, when you get to Philippians 4.3 and Paul says, help these women and Clement and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life. They're going to say, this is a reference to the saved, the book that contains the list of all of the saved. What sense does that make in this context? Why doesn't Paul say, I urge you true companion who is written in the book of life to help these others who are written in the book of life? Because we're all, why does he mention the book of life at all in this context? He says, these are worthies.

These are people who are doing the work of God in a special and unique way. And they are written in the book of life for that reason. The implication is the reason they're in the book of life, Clement and these women and the rest of Paul's fellow workers is they have sacrificially and beneficially in love, washed the feet of the saints, ministered to the needs of believers and at over time and at great cost to themselves have qualified to be in this book.

And this again is the book of the fruitful branch, the living branch that produces, you know, dead wheat doesn't bud, dead trees don't produce fruit. This is consistent with what we find in Revelation chapter three and verse five, the church at Sardis. Now the context is everything here.

The angel of the church in Sardis to that angel, right? These things says he who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your works. This is the church at Sardis now.

What is the characteristic of the church of Sardis? You have a reputation that you are alive, but you are dead. That's the church at Sardis. People say you're alive, but you're dead.

Now, if they're really dead, are they going to hear this letter? I know your works. You have a reputation for being alive, but I know your works and you're dead. This is dead in the sense of works dead in the sense of production of righteousness.

He says, be watchful, strengthen the things that remain that are ready to die. We've got a tree in our front yard, some kind of strange plum tree. I think it's some seedless, fruitless, some kind of a tree, but a big part of it was dead when we moved here.

But there was a little bit of it that was still alive. So when the tree trimmer guy came, he said, well, that's a real sad looking tree. He said, we can cut this back, but I'm not sure if it's going to live or not.

But if you cut away the dead stuff, there's a chance that the good will flourish. So he did. He hacked it all up.

And there's just a few little straggly branches coming out of what used to be the trunk of a largely dead tree. That's what he says here. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die.

For I have not found what? Your works perfect. Study to show yourself approved unto God. The word of God is alive and powerful.

The word of God is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. Why? So that the man of God may be perfect. It's the very same word here, complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The word of God furnishes us unto all good works. He says, Jesus says here to the Sardinians, what do you say people in Sardis? To the Sardines. He says, I have not found your works perfect before God.

You are not thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Strengthen what has not yet died. Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard.

Hold fast to that and change your mind. Hold fast to what you've received and heard. Have a change of heart.

Have a change of mind. If you will not watch, I will come upon you like a thief. You will not know what hour I will come upon you.

You have a few names. Look at this. You have a few names, verse four, in Sardis who have not defiled their garments.

What do garments represent? White robes of righteousness. There were people that had a garment of righteousness, but they fell away and they got dirt all over their robe of righteousness. You can start out being written in the book of the righteous.

And this is sort of like your white robe. Look at this warp and woof of the fabric of the fine linen. But then you peel off.

You get distracted. You get deflected. You go askew.

You fall for the lie. You fall for the deception and you start muddying up your garment. And Jesus says, most of the people in Sardis have dirtied their white robe.

They've besmirched themselves. They've befouled themselves. They have a stench and a blot and a stain on their white garment.

They've ruined their righteousness. But you have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled

their garments. Therefore, they shall walk with me in white.

There is a righteousness pertaining to the work and the fruit of our life here. And that's recorded in the book. And that constitutes a garment.

And there are two different garments here. Jesus said, the ones who are currently walking around in Sardis who have not defiled their garment, they are pursuing righteousness. They're living the life of faith.

They are going to walk with me in a different white garment. They're going to walk with me in white. And that work on earth, that fruit of the life is going to translate into something even greater and grander.

And they will walk with me. Now, how big a deal is that? Walk with Jesus in a white robe. Well, if you're not much, if you say, well, white makes me look fat or, you know, white is hard to keep clean.

We used to have white uniforms. And you sit down on a bench and you stand up and you got this dirt on the seat of your pants and you got to go change. You know, white is really hard to maintain.

It's easy to get it messed up. A lot of people don't like to wear white. You know, you don't wear white after, what is it? So some date before and after which you don't wear white.

Well, to walk with Jesus, it's kind of like the white stone. I mean, how big of a deal is that? To some people, walking with Jesus, I have to watch my language. We'll be doing holy things.

And who knows where he's going to want to go? And why would I want to walk with Jesus? I'd rather be over here, you know, peeling the bark off the tree of life, seeing if I can make something out of it. Or I'd rather be over here dominating the nations and ruling them with my little miniature rod of iron. Or I'd rather be doing one thing.

In other words, how important is it? How big of a privilege is it to walk with Jesus in white? Well, it depends on if those things are important to you or not. There are many believers who would just as soon be a safe distance from Jesus because they don't know him very well. They're not interested in what he's interested in.

He's going to talk about stuff that bores them. They're going to glaze over. Jesus started launching into the Sermon on the Mount or something.

They're going to say, oh, not this thing again. Blessed are the meek. How many times do I have to hear this? And they don't want to walk with Jesus.

They want to be in Borneo managing some plantation or something on the other side of the world from Jesus where they don't have to worry. They're believers. They appreciate Jesus saving and all that, but they're just not interested.

It's a reward and it's a privilege to the extent that you value the presence of the Lord Jesus. To the extent that that garment of white is important because it reflects his glory. If you're standing next to the Lord Jesus in his glorified state where he's radiating light and you're wearing white, guess what? You're reflecting his glory to the maximum extent and you stand close to him and you're wearing white.

And when people see that it's almost impossible to look directly at him, they're going to see all of these white robed saints in his company. And it's a privilege to the extent that you think it's a privilege. And those who don't value the presence of Jesus Christ in their heart coming to dwell with him because they love him now aren't going to value it later either.

So you have a few names, even as artists who have not defiled their garments, they shall walk with me in white for they are worthy. Now you talk to the Calvinists and we're all depraved, we're depraved, we're gross, we're groveling down in the mud. Jesus says these that have not defiled their garments are worthy.

They have worth. They have made decisions and they have seized and laid hold of worth and they are therefore worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, overcomes by faith.

This is not all believers. Most believers are not overcomers. The ones who do overcome these few names and Sardis that have not defiled their garments will be clothed in white garments, new white garments, supernatural, heavenly, eternal white garments.

And Jesus says, I will not blot out his name from the book of life. Why does he say this? What is the implication from this context? What about everybody else in Sardis who has muddied up and dirtied their robe of righteousness? They didn't care for it. When you have a great garment, you've got a new leather jacket or you have a fine dress or you have something that you really appreciate, you're careful, aren't you? Get a brand new suit, you know, you take off your coat before you eat gravy or spaghetti or you care for it.

And if you get something on it, you go wash it right away, get it in cold water, get the spots out because you appreciate it. You appreciate that garment. You don't want anything to happen to it.

You preserve it. Somebody gets married in grandma's wedding dress. They're walking around like they're made of cobwebs.

They're so careful because this is an antique. It's 100 years old. I don't want to mess it up.

If you value your garment, you don't let anything happen to it. You don't let it get torn. You don't lend it to a sloppy friend who's going to come back to having spilled beer all over it or whatever.

These who have soiled their garments and defiled their garments, they don't really value and

appreciate the garment and they're not going to walk with Christ in white and they're not going to have this new garment and their name is going to be blotted out of the book of life. They're saved. They're going into eternal future.

But this book is the book of those who value righteousness, who value the white garment, who value the close personal presence of Christ. That's who's in this book of life. It's the life that produces gold and silver and precious stones, that which reflects the glory of God, just like the fine white linen.

So are you beginning to see a pattern emerge about one of the major types of book that is kept in heaven, both in the Old Testament and in the New? Many of these passages seem to refer to the book of those who care about righteousness. It's not directly related to the book. But you remember in Ezekiel when we talked about the inkhorn angel who went about looking for those who sigh and cry over the fallen and decrepit state of Jerusalem and the dropping to the ground of the worship of God and so on.

They were marked out. They were recorded before judgment hit. God keeps track of who cares and who doesn't, who lives the life of faith and who doesn't.

And it's not related directly to salvation in terms of eternal salvation. It is related to these other things. When you get to Revelation chapter 13 and verse 8, you've got the beast has a mouth speaking great blasphemies.

He has authority to continue for half of the 70th week, 42 months, three and a half years. He opens his mouth. He blasphemes God, blasphemes God's name, blasphemes God's tabernacle, blasphemes the angels in heaven.

It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. He's given authority over every tribe, tongue and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him whose names have not been written in the book of life of the lamb slain.

And their names have not been written there from the foundation of the world. Both this passage and 17, 8, 13, 8 and 17, 8 talk about the same thing. I will tell you the mystery of the woman and the beast that carries her.

Revelation 17, 7, which has the seven heads and 10 horns. The beast that you saw was, is not, will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. Those who dwell on the earth will marvel whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.

When they see the beast that was and is not and yet is. Who is going to be fooled? Who is going to be deceived? Who is going to marvel and be enthralled by the beast? The unsaved. And God has known since the foundation of the world who is saved and who is not.

Now, Calvinists will say, see there, that is the list of the elect. It is not the existence of the list that is in question. I am here to tell you, like any good Calvinist will tell you, that God knew who

was going to be saved before the foundation of the world.

Hence, the nation of Israel is the place of birth and dwelling for the saved in the Old Testament. God doesn't have believers popping up in Borneo or China or the southern tip of South America in Old Testament days where they can't get any information. They can't worship.

They can't learn anything about substitutionary sacrifice or look forward to the coming of God's son. God knew from the foundation of the world when he creates these souls, he knows that some will be saved and some will not. He's God.

He knows this. His knowledge is not determinative. Reformed theology says if God knows a thing, it's like the Midas touch.

Once he knows it, it has to happen. His knowledge decrees it. Nonsense.

That's a small, limited God. God is trapped within his own knowledge. Oh no, I thought a thought.

Now it's going to happen. That's a weird, human invented, limited God. God, our God, the God of the Bible and the God of the universe is much greater than that.

God can create a free agent that is entirely independent, can make its own decisions, irrespective of environment, irrespective of heredity, irrespective of any factor other than its own choice. And it's like creating a random number generator in computers. You can do some programming and make use of some features in the computer and you can get a thing that will generate some random number.

And you use this a lot of times. The random number generator will generate a number between zero and one. It'll be .13768, whatever it is.

Now, when we do that as programmers, nobody knows what that number is going to be. That's why they call it random. It's just going to pop into existence and it can be 27 digits long.

Nobody knows who that's going to be. God, on the other hand, when he creates souls, when he creates sentient beings and gives them totally free will, he already knows how that will is going to choose. He didn't implant it.

He didn't cause it. He's not responsible for it. But he knows because he's God.

And the way I think of this in my mind, because I'm a limited human being, is I would know what somebody was going to choose. I've got a daughter and she's going to be driving on her own soon. And she'll get in the car and she'll drive down here.

And when she gets to Park Lane, she can either turn right or turn left. It's one or the other. I don't know which way she's going to go.

But if I could jump to tomorrow and stand at the corner and watch her pull up and then turn right, then tomorrow I can say as a historical fact, well, Elizabeth came to the corner and turned right. Go right. You can't go wrong.

I've told her that all her life. Well, now I jump back to the present because I was in the future and saw the choice. Now I'm in the past and I know what the choice is going to be.

But did I make Elizabeth turn right? Did I have any causative influence on her at all? No, I didn't. Well, God knows the end from the beginning. God is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

He surrounds time. He encapsulates time. So God, for human purposes, can be in the future looking back and know what the choice of a free will agent is going to be.

That's the easiest accommodation for our limited understanding that I can think of. Say all of that to say this. God knew when he founded the world, when he first put the plan into operation, that when he created sentient creatures, angelic and human, some of them would choose for him and some of them would choose against him.

God knew it. God knew when he appointed Lucifer to be the guardian cherub of the throne room and made him the pinnacle of all of his created beings, he knew he was going to turn against him. Just as he knew that Adam and Eve in the garden were going to fall.

God knew that. God did not cause it. It is the definition of a free agent that it's free.

But God weaves these free will decisions into his plan and purpose. Those who are going to choose for God are written in a book from the foundation of the world. That way, God can pick the time and the place of their birth and their life and ensure that there is provision for them.

God doesn't have to react and have stuff blow up in his face and say, wait a minute, I've got a believer in Dallas, Texas. Where's he going to get the word of God? Oh, let's see. Let me look around and see if I can find a place.

God knew that you and I would be here in this room on this morning before the universe was created. And he made provision so that we who hunger and thirst for the knowledge of his word could come and find it and be satisfied and be filled. Well, that's why in Revelation chapter 13, Revelation chapter 17, it says that these who are not fooled by the beast have been written down in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world.

Revelation chapter 21, verse 27, talking about the new Jerusalem. The people are going to bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. There shall by no means enter the new Jerusalem, anything that defiles or causes an abomination or a lie.

Now, that's only the new Jerusalem. How big is the new earth? I don't know, but it's a lot bigger than the new Jerusalem, which is what did we say? Thirteen hundred and eighty miles on one

linear dimension, four ways. So basically a fourteen hundred mile wide, deep, high and some other dimension city and the earth that it sits on is a lot bigger than that.

And if things are stopped at the gate of the new Jerusalem because they might cause an abomination or a lie or they might defile, what does that tell you? There is something coming up to the gate that could cause an abomination, a lie or defile. Otherwise, why are we saying this? If there's nothing in the whole new heaven and new earth that could cause a lie, an abomination or defile anything, why would we be talking about stopping something at the gate? Inside the gate is the place of holiness. Inside the gate is the place where the righteous dwell.

Inside is where people dwell to have those white robes on. And we're not getting any spots on these robes. We care about them.

We love the righteousness of God. Nothing is going to besmirch these robes. Outside are the dogs and the immoral and those who love and practice a lie.

Even in the new earth, there are things outside that are not the same as what is inside. So there is a sin not unto death. There is something that will defile, cause an abomination.

This is why the leaves of the tree of life are going to go out from Jerusalem for the healing of the nations. Something needs to be healed. Something is broken.

Something's not right. If everything was perfect in the whole new heaven and the new earth, why are we talking about abominations and defilement? Why are we talking about people who are excluded? If everything's as perfect outside as it is in, why is there any wall around the new Jerusalem? Makes no sense. We have this vision that in the eternal future, it's just going to be spotless white.

It's not what the Bible says. So it's important that we have our entry in God's book of the righteous and that our lives reflect faith. And obedience and that we have a nice long list that qualifies us to walk with Christ in white.

There is no reason for us not to be an overcomer by faith. These in Daniel chapter 12 verse 1 found written in the book are those who are going to shine like the brightness of the firmament because they are wise. They are the ones who are going to turn many to righteousness.

If you live a life that is dedicated to righteousness, others are going to see it and be influenced. That's true evangelism. That's winning someone without a word.

You shine the light of Christ. Those who want to respond to Christ are going to see Christ in us and respond. They are going to turn.

It's a passive thing by pursuing righteousness. God can use us to be a blessing to others, to be a blessing to each other. Well, that's you could spend a lot of time on these books, but that is

the most important aspect of this book in Daniel 12.

One is the book of the righteous. It is the book of those who turn many to that righteousness, who shine like lights and like stars. We hope that we can be one of those little pinpoints of light in the eternal future.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the privilege you've given us. You've transferred us out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of light, into the kingdom of your son.

We pray that we will be constantly impressed with the opportunity and the potential to be those who reflect his glory both now and in the age to come. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.