**WHAT WE SHOULD KNOW**

**(Daniel 12:1-13)**

 When a child is two-year’s-old, he has a favorite word. He uses it with amazing regularity. The word is just two-letters in length. It is the word *no.* He discovers that it is a powerful word. With that little word he can assert his independence and attempt to win a war of wills with adults. Due to his size and age, he doesn’t have many weapons at his disposal. *No,* however, is a formidable weapon he can wield to frustrate any adversary that might stand in his way.

 When he gets a little older, maybe 4 or 5, he has another favorite word. This one is three-letters long. In his mind, there is no occasion where this word is not suitable. It is the word *why.* Just about anything an adult says or does can be questioned with *why.* A child has a natural sense of curiosity. They are sponges who want to absorb the workings of the world around them.

 When I was a parent of young children, I discovered that *no* had returned to my vocabulary. I found myself answering their requests with *no,* too often. I decided I should say *yes* unless there was a compelling reason not to. I think that was a wise decision.

 At the risk of being annoying, I think we should employ *why* more often than we do. It seems to me that most adults have lost their sense of curiosity. Maybe they assume that they know it already. Maybe, due to pride, they don’t want to confess that they don’t know certain things. We should aim to learn new things every day. We should all want to be life-long learners.

 My wife is a big supporter of Chautauqua in Enid. Each summer there is a series of meeting in the evenings at the Cherokee Strip Museum. The meetings are held under a big tent and feature individuals who portray historical figures. They dress in costume, assume the identity of a certain person from history and tell about their life. It is both entertaining and educational. There is also a winter Chautauqua. It is just one-night and is held at the NWSU here in Enid.

 The winter Chautauqua was held just last night. The visiting scholar portrayed the inventor Thomas Edison. I think Edison maintained his sense of curiosity. In addition to wanting to know how things worked, he also wanted to know how to make them work better. At the time of his death, Edison had 1093 patents to his name.

 As Christians, we should maintain a strong sense or curiosity concerning the Bible. Every time we open its pages, we should ask questions. The more questions we ask the more answers we will get.

 We have to keep in mind, however, that there are some things that will remain a mystery. They are shrouded from our understanding. This is well-illustrated in the closing chapter of Daniel, chapter 12.

 Our last message ended with 12:4. That means we should pick up in 12:5. We are, but I am going to throw in some thoughts from vv. 1-4. Look first at what Daniel was told in v. 4.

 There is disagreement as the exact meaning of this verse. It seems that Daniel is being told, “We have come to the end of the revelations that have been entrusted to you. You can end your book, but don’t go around trying to explain it. The truth of these prophecies will become clear at the time they are fulfilled.”

 The last words of v. 4 are words of hope. Knowledge of God’s word will increase. There will be many who will go forth to teach it.

 We should ask questions, but not all of our questions will be answered. Daniel had some unanswered questions and some were answered but the answers he received were not fully comprehended. Look at vv. 5-9.

 Consider what we read in Deuteronomy 29:29:

**29**“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Notice also Romans 11:33:

**33**Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

 We are not going to know everything this side of heaven, but we need to keep asking and searching because there are many more things to be discovered and others that will be revealed.

 Despite the unanswered questions of Daniel 12, the chapter does affirm some things that we can and should know. Tonight, we will focus on “What We Should Know” from this chapter.

1. **SINCE THERE IS A BOOK OF LIFE, WE SHOULD KNOW WHETHER OUR NAME IS IN IT.**

 At the end of v. 1, Daniel mentions a book and that those whose names are found in that book will be delivered. What is this book, and what does he mean by *delivered?* This book sounds very similar to a book described in the NT. In the NT it is called the Book of Life.

 Let’s chase through the NT to look at this idea of having our names written down in a special place or a special book.

 Look at:

* Luke 10:20
* Philippians 4:3
* Revelation 3:5
* Revelation 13:8
* Revelation 20:12-15
* Revelation 21:27

 Potentially, our name is on lots of lists. When you are in school your name is on a class roll. You want to have your name on the Principal’s Honor Roll. When I was in high school, I made it into a Who’s Who Book. I’m convince that was just a ploy to sell more books. By my 18th birthday I had to register for the draft even though we no longer have the draft. Your name makes it on to the tax roll. Of course, there is Santa’s Naughty and Nice lists. In Church, we have a Sunday School roll and a church roll.

 The only book, roll, or list that eternally matters is the Lamb’s Book of Life. Make sure your name is there.

1. **SINCE THERE ARE TWO RESURRECTIONS, WE SHOULD KNOW WHICH ONE WILL BE OURS.**

 Look at v. 2. There is not complete agreement as to whether these resurrections take place at the same time or at two different times, but the point of v. 2 is that there are two resurrections in the sense that two different fates await those who are raised. Some will be raised to everlasting life and others to shame and contempt.

 Jesus spoke of these two resurrections in John 5:28-29. The grave is not the end. It has been said that if you have two births you will only die once, but if you have only one birth you will die twice.

 God wants us to know, to be certain of our salvation. We shouldn’t guess that we are saved or hope that we are saved; we can and should know that we are saved.

 Years ago, when I was a youth, I would go to Falls Creek every year. One year we had a popular preacher from Oklahoma who was the preacher for the week. He pastored a large church and was well-known in the denomination. It seemed that every sermon was aimed at getting people to doubt their salvation; so that they would come down at the invitation and get saved because they probably hadn’t really been saved the first time.

 When we got back from Falls Creek, my pastor made a wise decision. He preached through the Book of 1 John. John never calls upon the believer to doubt his salvation. He says, “Here is how you can know you are saved. Here are the evidences of your salvation.

 God wants us to know. Look at 1 John 5:13.

1. **SINCE WE CAN SHINE FOR GOD ALWAYS, WE SHOULD KNOW WE**

 **SHINE RIGHT NOW.**

 Look at v. 3. Those who are raised to everlasting life are going to shine brightly bringing praise to God. The verse doesn’t say we will be stars. We will shine like stars.

 Before we shine in eternity, I think we ought to be well-practiced here. We are to let Jesus shine out from our lives to a watching world. Look at Matthew 5:14-16.

 You even have a responsibility to shine for Jesus even if you are the President of the United States. On an August weekend in 1982, Ronald Reagan wrote this in his diary: “More of Saturday’s work plus a long letter I have to write to Loyal. I’m afraid for him. His health is failing badly.” Loyal Davis, Reagan’s father-in-law and a neurosurgeon, was just days away from death.

 Something else worried Reagan: The dying man was an atheist. Davis once wrote, “I have never been able to subscribe to the divinity of Jesus Christ nor his virgin birth. I don’t believe in his resurrection, or a heaven or hell as places.”

 Reagan, on the other hand, believed everyone would face a day of judgment, and that Davis’ was near. So, the most powerful man in the world put everything else aside, took pen in hand and set out on an urgent mission—to rescue one soul.

 The following [letter was found in the Reagan Library](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-lost-letter-from-ronald-reagan-to-his-dying-father-in-law-shows-the-presidents-faith/2018/09/14/5aaab8c0-b140-11e8-9a6a-565d92a3585d_story.html?utm_term=.cacfbf4d48c1) as part of Nancy Reagan’s personal effects:

 Dear Loyal, I hope you’ll forgive me for this, but I’ve been wanting to write you ever since we talked on the phone. I’m aware of the strain you are under and believe with all my heart there is help for that . . .

 It was a miracle that a young man of 30 yrs. without credentials as a scholar or priest had more impact on the world than all the teachers, scientists, emperors, generals, and admirals who ever lived, all put together. Either he was who he said he was or he was the greatest faker & charlatan who ever lived. But would a liar & faker suffer the death he did?

 Reagan wrote out John 3:16 for his father-in-law and then added:

 We have been promised that all we have to do is ask God in Jesus name to help when we have done all we can—when we’ve come to the end of our strength and abilities and we’ll have that help. We only have to trust and have faith in his infinite goodness and mercy.

 Did the letter have any impact? Nancy Reagan, who was with her father when he died, and who saved the letter he received from his son-in-law, would later claim that her father did turn to God at the end of his life.

 Don’t wait until a person is on their deathbed, but like President Reagan be light to those who are still in darkness.

1. **SINCE JESUS IS COMING BACK, WE SHOULD KNOW WE ARE LIVING READY.**

 Look at vv. 9-10, 13.

 It was August of 79 A.D. when Mount Vesuvius erupted, and when it did, the nearby Italian city of Pompeii was completely destroyed and covered in ash. Researchers have dug through the ruins of the city and found numerous skeletal remains. Almost all of them were facing away from the explosion desperately seeking a way of escape. They found one set of remains facing toward the explosion. He was a Roman soldier, a guard, who had not deserted his post.

 Three times in Ephesians 6, Paul calls upon us to stand strong and to stand firm, and to stand outfitted with our spiritual armor. Not matter what or who comes against you, stand for Christ.