

2017
What We Know
What We Don't Know

Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!
(Psalm 46:10).

WHAT WE KNOW

Although we live in a world fraught with danger and uncertainty, there are some things we can know. These are things that can calm the anxious spirit, soothe the troubled soul and bring hope to the discouraged. They are declarations made by a God who never changes, who loves us with an everlasting love, and who forgives our sins through the shed blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture (Psalm 100:3).

What a tranquil scene it is to view sheep in their own pasture - content, cared for and unafraid. There are hundreds of references to God's people as sheep and His role as a shepherd in the Bible. This is the visualization He wants for us. In His care, we don't need to look for greener pastures, for even when we *walk through the valley of the shadow of death*, He is there. He never forsakes us. He never turns His back. God has promised that we can dwell in His house forever.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).

No matter our physical disabilities, our financial woes, or any other adverse circumstance, for those in the family of God, all these things are temporary.

And this is the testimony; that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:11-13).

WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

Donald Rumsfeld's public service spanned many years. He is best remembered as having served twice as the U. S. Secretary of Defense from 1975 to 1977 under President Gerald Ford and from 2001 to 2006 under President George W. Bush. After his public service was over, he entitled his memoir, *Known and Unknown*. In answering a question in a Department of Defense news briefing in February 2002, Mr. Rumsfeld said,

Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and

other free countries, it is the latter category that tend to be the difficult ones
(["Defense.gov News Transcript: DoD News Briefing – Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers, United States Department of Defense \(defense.gov\)"](#).)

Unbelievers may think that Jesus is not coming again, like He said, but to Christians, that future event is a "known known." Believers know He is because He is Truth. Many prophecies pertaining to Jesus have already happened and we can be sure that the remaining prophecies will be fulfilled.

There are things, however, that we don't know - and that's OK. Mostly, they have to do with timing. God's timing is perfect. He will do what will bring Him glory at the proper time. All He asks of us is to be ready.

*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only....
Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming (Matthew 24:36,42).*

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth (Proverbs 27:1).

*For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night...
The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their
boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away....
So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom (Proverbs 90:4, 10, 12).*

The end of one year and the beginning of another often makes us pause to reflect. Reflecting on the past year may bring joy or regret or a combination of both, depending on how we lived it. Dreaming of tomorrow may bring hope and anticipation of good things to come or changes that may need to be made. If we evaluate ourselves truthfully, these exercises can be very beneficial. What we need to concentrate on, though, is that although yesterday is indeed written in our personal history, what will happen tomorrow or next year - or even this hour - is known only by God.

Just think of the unexpected things that happened in the previous year. In last year alone - 2016 - the surprises have far outnumbered any human predictions.

None of the people who were killed or injured in any of the terror attacks across the globe knew what was coming or they would not have been in that place at that time. *"But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and now allowed his house to be broken into (Matthew 24:43).*

"Come now, you who say, 'today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit', whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that' (James 4:13-15). Since only He knows the hour of our death, or the end of the world as we know it, the writer of Proverbs and the Lord Himself tell us to "number our days" and "watch". Live every moment as if it were your last one on earth.

That is the best-known advice for all our unknowns.