

A Biblical Political Strategy

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D. Eric Williams, *A Biblical Political Strategy*

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● ***The Oppressed*** ●

Early in the reign of Zedekiah the prophet Jeremiah wrote a letter of encouragement to his exiled countrymen which said in part, *This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the exiles who were taken from Jerusalem into exile to Babylon, 'Build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and father sons and daughters. Take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so they may have sons and daughters. Increase in numbers there, don't decrease. Seek the welfare of the city to which I've exiled you and pray to the LORD for it, for your welfare depends on its welfare'*(Jeremiah 29:4-7). In a nut shell, Jeremiah was writing to a captive people, telling them to take dominion and to support their oppressors.

According to the covenant, persistent disobedience results in exile (Deuteronomy 28:36). Thus, deportation was not evidence of Israel's abandonment but of God's continued interest in their welfare. Like all punishment promised in the covenant, exile was designed winnow the covenant people and turn remnant Israel back to Yahweh. Some apostatized under the lash of chastisement and they were divested from the heritage of Israel but as we know from Scripture many Jews taken into captivity were pious servants of the most high God. For them, exile brought refinement not rejection.

It is interesting to note that the deportees represented the influence and expertise of the Jewish nation. It was the policy of Nebuchadnezzar to carry off the leaders and the entrepreneurial class of a nation in order to short-circuit dreams of revolution. The "nobodies" left behind did not have the charisma, experience or training necessary to stir the popular patriotic fervor required to throw off a foreign yoke. In reality, the influence and expertise of Judah had come under the sway of Babylon.

Christians in the USA are not in literal exile but, much like the Jews of Jeremiah's day, we are a nation within a nation. The kingdom of God is not *of* this world but it is *in* the world and is intended to be realized in this realm. Thus our allegiance is first to Jesus Christ and our primary citizenship is in the kingdom of heaven. As things stand, an American Christian who is truly serious about his faith will eventually find himself in opposition to the culture and politics of the day.

So yes, we are a people in exile; we are a people oppressed. And like the Judeans held

captive in Babylon we find that the prevailing power seeks to steel away our citizens of influence and expertise. Unfortunately Christians are often accomplices in this endeavor. Too many Christians send their children to the public schools, receive public aid, turn a blind eye to cultural rot and kneel before the god of "fitting in." In this way the oppressing power snatches away our people of influence and expertise. It is a successful tactic. People in exile, indoctrinated in the ideology of their oppressors, will never rise up in opposition.

Nonetheless, Jeremiah 29:1-9 tells us that God's people in exile are supposed to take dominion and support their oppressors. In other words, the prophet provides us with a biblical dominion strategy tailor made for twenty-first century America.

We need to realize we are not in the circumstance by chance just as it's was Yahweh who carried Israel into captivity (through the agency of Nebuchadnezzar) likewise we find ourselves in exile according to the will of God. There is no blessing extended to those who quit the battlefield. We have abandoned the world to Satan and have been Justly punished with exile.

Unfortunately we do not understand the extent of our captivity. Indeed, many Christians enjoy the status quo and are frightened by the prospect of change. They are comfortable in the Christian ghetto and make excuses for their failure to engage the enemy. After all there is comfort in the softness of the evangelical subculture with its own "God as girlfriend" music, second-rate film making, fluffy books and a commitment to simply fit in when beyond the four walls of the church. No doubt, many Christians stand out in this 21st century post-Christian culture – but for all the wrong reasons. They stand out because of their timidity in the face of challenge Rather than because of their courage in proclaiming an alternate society. They stand out not because they know how to celebrate the goodness of God but because they don't. They stand out not because they believe they are part of something worth fighting for but because they proclaim a "gospel" of defeat and hope for a cataclysmic and of the world is the know it.

It is not as if this love of otherworldliness is a newfangled invention. The Gnostic impulse has bedeviled the church for two thousand years. Truly this is the nature of much of modern Christianity. Many Christians claim orthodoxy because they believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation but they betray their Gnostic leanings in their insistence that God's kingdom is spiritual and otherworldly. They cry heresy to those who claim Jesus Christ holds all authority in heaven and earth today rather than sometime in the future.

We are in exile because this mindset of defeat is everywhere in the church. True, there are outposts of believers who understand they have a duty to take dominion but it seems they are few and far between. Thus, the 21st century church in America is in exile. We have chosen to be in exile and the Lord of hosts has given us what we desire. Nonetheless, we do not worship a God who desires his people to be in exile permanently. Instead we worship a God who is victorious. We worship a God who demands that we take dominion.

● ***Taking Dominion*** ●

The message Jeremiah sent to the exiles was rather strange. Rather than say "keep your chin up and hope for the best" he told them to take dominion. This even though the Jews had been defeated by the greatest power of the ancient world - the chief "beast" kingdom of the four empires used by God to shepherd his people.

To enjoin compliance with the dominion mandate meant the captives had a continuing responsibility of obedience to Yahweh regardless of their circumstance. This was true although they lacked self rule, liberty of movement and had suffered the loss of wealth and position. It was true even though they were in a foreign country that looked to a foreign god as its ultimate authority. The circumstance of the captives did not encourage even the simplest aspects of obedience. Yet Jeremiah told the exiles to take dominion.

Dominion is often misunderstood. Biblically defined, it is not the heavy-hand of tyranny but is the gentle cultivation of obedience to Yahweh in an individual's life and arena of activity. The Jews did not need political power or influence to take dominion. Daniel was a man of power and influence in Babylon but, generally, there was no special privilege granted the Jewish people because of his position. Indeed, even a native born Babylonian would have no power or influence in the kingdom apart from the court of the king. Humanly speaking, no common citizen would have been able to "take dominion" in Babylon. If we want to understand what Jeremiah meant we need to define dominion biblically.

In the book of Genesis we read, *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth (Genesis 1:26-28). And again in Genesis 2: 15, Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. This is dominion. Getting married, having children, building a house, planting a garden - making a positive difference in society (again biblically defined) and doing all as unto the Lord of hosts. Dominion is to bring one's arena of activity under the authority of Almighty God.*

And lest the Jews lose heart, Jeremiah reminds them that they will succeed because God is in control. He said *this is what the Lord of the heavenly armies the God of Israel says*. In other words, Jeremiah has it on the best authority that the Jews in Babylon are supposed to remain faithful to the most basic idea of the covenant.

Therefore, Jeremiah told the exiles that the covenant remained in force. He reminded them they had a responsibility to walk in obedience to God's law. Moreover, he told them that obedience to the dominion mandate would prepare them for future blessing (Jeremiah 29:10-14).

It is the duty of twenty-first century Christians to take dominion just as the exiles took dominion; to bring our arena of activity under the authority of Jesus Christ. We do not grasp for power or seek out a "Christian" politician to run for the highest office in the land or plot to overthrow the government. It means we do the simple things of raising a family, building a house and business, planting a garden, reaching out to those in need and so on. To take dominion is to do all the simple things in life and to do them with gusto as unto the Lord.

It begins in the heart of the individual who is made a new creation in Christ. The man who is a new creation will desire to obey his Lord and will eagerly look for ways to put the stamp of Christ's authority on everything he does. He will begin to change the way he thinks, shunning thoughts he previously found acceptable. He will flee from youthful lusts. He will labor to overcome his propensity toward foul language. He will dress in a way that does not draw attention to himself but gives glory to God through modesty and quality. He will learn the Bible and how it was understood by the original audience so that he might apply the principle he finds there to his own life and the life of his family. He will take leadership in his household praying with his wife and children and teaching them the things of God so they may also walk in obedience to King Jesus. He will serve those under his care to nurture their abilities and will take joy in seeing them excel in what God has made them to be. He will be a business owner who is honest, turning out a quality product. His business will not be merely an engine of profit but will be a means of serving others; not only through the goods and services he produces but by taking his increase and helping those in need. Yet, he will not help the less fortunate with a simple handout but by funding apprenticeships and education enabling people to begin to take dominion in their own arena of activity.

He will be a servant in his church and community just as he is a servant in his household. In the church he will joyfully take the lowest place endeavoring to do jobs no one else wants to do. He will clean toilets and sweep floors and do so heartily as unto the Lord recognizing that his work is helping to realize the kingdom of God on Earth. As he grows in maturity and as established leadership recognizes his increasing Christlikeness, he will willingly shoulder additional responsibility as opportunity arises. He will take time to work with his own family and other families in his church to reach out to the unsaved with the Gospel of Jesus Christ preaching the truth in word and deed.

In his community he will be a responsible citizen, obeying the laws and respecting authority. He will take advantage of his citizenship to further the aims of the kingdom (Acts

16:37, 22:25, 25:11). This includes involvement in the political process as God gives him talent and time to do so. He may not run for office but he will vote in a way that helps preserve an environment favorable to the advance of the kingdom. This does not mean he will be satisfied with the absence of prohibitions on proselytizing but will labor to produce a situation favorable to the outworking of all aspects of the kingdom. He will recognize Christ's rule over all things - not just individual hearts. He will acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus in the realm of science, medicine, agriculture, economics, politics, education, the arts and so on. This means he will have an eye to the future and will know he cannot be satisfied with the status quo or accepting the "lesser of two evils" in the absence of a biblical dominion strategy. Instead, he must be part of a community with a long-term strategy for dominion including the education of Christians in biblical political theory - but only as one part of a comprehensive plan for dominion. And again, dominion does not come by the imposition of power but by the preaching of the Gospel, the changing of hearts and the work of individuals and families in bringing their sphere of influence under the authority of Almighty God.

The school for Dominion is the church. The man who exercises the authority of Jesus Christ in his own life, family, community and church does not do so in isolation. This takes place under the teaching authority of church leadership. Through the teaching of the Word and the participation in the liturgy of the church men and women, boys and girls learn what it means to take dominion. They learned how to cultivate the new creation and how to bring their arena of activity under the authority of Jesus Christ.

It is in the church that they learn the signs and rituals of the new creation civilization. It is in the participation of the sacraments and the liturgy that Dominion believers train their soul in appropriate behavior before the King. Just as the elite athlete practices the fundamental movements of his game over and over until become second nature, likewise Christians must practice the breaking of bread in taking of the cup the Lord's supper, must practice the recitation and singing of Scripture must practice the posture of prayer so that these things are part of our nature. Thus, we move into this world carrying our banner of the kingdom. Our practice and ritual reflect the liturgy of heaven and sets us apart from the rest of the world, proclaiming that we are part of the family of God. Truly, the church is the cradle of the new creation civilization it is in the institution of the church that men are disciplined toward Christlikeness and victorious living.

And we make this proclamation because of the victory Jesus won on the cross. The apostle Paul came preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). Yet this message was a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Greeks (1 Corinthians 1:18). The first century world saw the cross as a sign of humiliation and defeat. But the Bible tells us that humiliation and defeat was heaped upon the enemies of Jesus rather than the Christ. Paul tells us that if the rulers of this age had known the outcome of Christ's crucifixion *they would not have crucified the Lord of glory* (1 Corinthians 2:8). Thus the death of Jesus resulted in the death of the old Adamic man. He was stripped of his clothing but it was the enemies of Christ, the forces of evil who were stripped of their gilded trappings. He was bruised and broken but

it was the pain and hardship of his people laid upon him that was defeated. He bled from a multitude of wounds and an issue of water and blood poured forth from his side yet it was the crimson sins of his people that were washed white as snow and a new Israel that sprang forth from the waters of baptism in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lest anyone doubt the victory of the cross Christ's claims were vindicated in his resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ pro-claimed that Israel's hope had been fulfilled. More than that it was a proclamation that Israel had been redefined around the person of Jesus Christ and that the covenant promises given to Abraham were extended to all mankind in him (Galatians 3:26-29).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ also affirmed his Lordship over the world. The Roman Centurion who stood by the cross and proclaimed *truly this was the son of God* spoke in the context of a world wherein the supreme authority was Caesar, son of the divine Emperor Augustus (Mark 15:39). Thus to use the phrase as it had been applied to Jesus in his life and ministry constituted an implicit confrontation with Caesar, and signaled God's desire to redeem creation not abandon it. In Christ, God defeated the forces of evil that had so long held creation captive. In Christ, God had at long last reclaimed creation as his own. This is one reason we affirm the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a true bodily, physical resurrection. It is compelling evidence that God has not given up on his creation but instead has given Jesus Christ all authority on heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). Therefore, we have a responsibility to take dominion on behalf of the one who rules this created realm.

The resurrection also vindicated the claims of uniqueness made by Jesus Christ. Jesus made it clear that he is the place where mankind meets with God (John 1:51, 2:19-22). He made it clear that he is the end of theophany and the beginning of God with us (John 14:9-11). His resurrection verified that Jesus is the personal embodiment and revelation of the one true God and that the one true God chose to be manifest in this physical realm as an acknowledgment of his desire to reconcile creation to himself (Colossians 1:20). In light of this, it is our responsibility to make plans for the realization of the reconciliation.

● ***Supporting Oppressors*** ●

The Hebrew term *shalom* translated as peace in Jeremiah 29:7 has a broad meaning including the sentiments of "welfare, safety, health, quiet and tranquility." Thus Jeremiah instructed the exiles to seek the order and stability of Babylon because in its peaceful condition they would have peace - and a healthy environment for doing the work of dominion.

Civic authorities of every kind prefer quiet hard working citizens who are productive, willing to pay their taxes and disinclined toward political turmoil. They normally ignore the common man as long as he doesn't plot to seize the mantle of authority by force. The irony is, a nation populated by dominion Believers will have citizens willing to support the peace of the regime precisely because doing so assures them of its eventual downfall. Not a downfall produced by violent revolution but by the quiet victory of the Gospel as the good news compels thousands to bring their sphere of influence under the authority of Almighty God. It is in the environment of peace and stability that the work of dominion flourishes.

The apostle Paul wrote a letter to the church in Rome during the reign of Nero Caesar telling them, *be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God* (Romans 13:1-2). Do not forget; these words were written while Paul was under the authority of an empire much like Babylon. Rome was an empire known for its penchant to build and its expertise in destruction. They built roads throughout the empire – roads that enabled the destructive march of the legions. They built spectacular coliseums that received thousands eager to see the spectacle of death. They brought a system of law and order to a far-flung empire and enforced that law with the brutality of crucifixion. Nonetheless, Paul said the existing authority of Nero and his empire had been established by God. Just so, Jeremiah said God had chosen Nebuchadnezzar to subjugate the children of Israel and to chasten them as part of their covenant relationship with Yahweh (Jeremiah 25:9, 27:6, 43:10). Hence, to pray for and to seek the peace of Rome or Babylon is to acknowledge the rightful authority of the civil government and to endeavor to maintain its stability regardless of its moral character.

Whatever form of government the people of God find themselves subject to is the

system given them by God to maintain order while they take dominion. Here in the USA we have been blessed with the opportunity to effect change in the civic realm through participation. However, we must not view our participation as a short cut to the new creation civilization. Politics is just one facet of human culture. The orderly advance of the kingdom does not allow for rushing ahead in one aspect while other features of the new creation civilization lag behind. Little by little, all parts of human culture must come under the sway of king Jesus. This is why we need to bide our time and work for the stability of the nation. The fruit of long term obedience does not ripen overnight and an isolated hunger for political power betrays misplaced faith.

So, we pray for and seek the stability of this nation. Not because we want to maintain our personal peace and comfort until the rapture but because we need "elbow room" to build. It takes time to knead the yeast into the dough. It takes time for bread to rise. It takes time to bake bread - and a disruption of the activity may retard or kill the action of the yeast or result in an undercooked loaf. Certainly we should support true Christian candidates for public office, but this should take place at the local level first as we build a firm foundation for later advancement. The real work of dominion happens in the cultivation of the new creation in our personal and familial sphere of influence.

Dominion strategy may involve casting a vote for the "lesser of two evils" but only because we should vote for the candidate most likely to leave us alone while we take dominion. This is the point of praying for and seeking the peace *of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive*. Nonetheless, voting for the lesser of two evils in the absence of a kingdom world view is wrong. It is doing the right thing for the wrong reason and according to the Bible, that is sin (Romans 14:23). Really, Christians who are unwilling to take dominion should not vote at all. Indeed, they should stay out of the way completely - and let more courageous men and women get to work.

We must not think we are called to *blindly* seek the peace of the city wherein we find ourselves. Nor are we to bow the knee to man rather than God. The best way to support our oppressors is to obey God in everything. If we find that our obedience to God is disruptive to the peace of the nation, we obey God nonetheless.

Sometimes a sound strategy means we obey God and pull the wool over the eyes of our oppressors at the same time. Shiphrah and Puah, the Hebrew midwives who deceived the Pharaoh did so as oppressed people who refused to obey man rather than God at the risk of their own lives. *As a result, God dealt well with the midwives and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that he provided households for them* (Exodus 1:20-21).

Often our service to oppressors will take the form of filling gaps. Where the oppressive regime is lax we step in. Kingdom believers are called to serve the lowly, protect the helpless and speak for those who have no voice. This is good for the nation as a whole even though our oppressors may not realize it. Moreover, it undermines the power of the oppressor.

Yet we must never forget that dominion is not accomplished by human means. The

kingdom of God does not advance through the election of a few conservative politicians here and there, people who ultimately bow to the same god as their liberal counterparts. No, dominion is accomplished through the grass-roots transformation of society by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As the Gospel takes hold, trans-forming individuals, families and communities it will eventually give birth to thousands of kingdom believers who are involved in all parts of life. Those who are gifted for civic leadership should consider a run for public office but only after having been thoroughly trained in kingdom thinking. Our *ultimate* goal is not to vote for the lesser of two evils but to unleash an army of people educated in a kingdom world-view who understand what the Bible says about good civil government. This plan of action is a bottom up, grassroots change. Remember, the strategy of voting for the lesser of two evils is only designed to give us room to work and must be carefully considered.

The new creation civilization, nurtured in the womb of the church, must burst forth into the marketplace with a recognizable aroma of Christlikeness. That aroma must spread from the church to the world around it. Like the scent of a well kneaded, properly risen loaf just emerging from the oven, the aroma of the new creation civilization is attractive even to those destined to fall before it's onward march. Remember, do-minion is not about force but cross bearing. If we walk in self sacrificing service even as Jesus walked, the new creation civilization will be realized right beneath the noses of our oppressors. Undoubtedly they will note and even enjoy the aroma of baking bread; they may even en-courage bread baking as a national pastime. But because we seek the stability of the nation just as they do, they will not realize the magnitude of the bread baking enterprise until the entire country is buried in loaves.

The Truth About The Boy Who Came Back From Heaven

The Good, The Bad And The Ugly

ISBN/EAN13: 1466488786 / 9781466488786

Page Count: 57

Should we take seriously a story about a boy who routinely visits heaven? And what measuring stick should we use in answering that question? Is it enough that this tale employs Christian terminology or is there a higher standard we must look to? Find out in the booklet, *The Truth About The Boy Who Came Back From Heaven: The Good, The Bad And The Ugly*.



The Truth About

The boy who
came back
from heaven

The Good, The Bad And The Ugly

D. Eric Williams

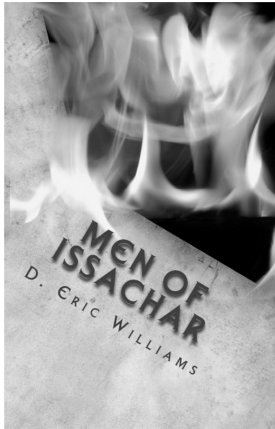
Men Of Issachar

Understand The Times, Know What To Do

ISBN/EAN13: 1441435670 / 9781441435675

Page Count:190

According to Webster's dictionary a crisis is a "decisive moment or an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs" in history. It is fashionable to suggest the early 21st century is a time of crisis. We are told by our leadership that crisis is at every hand. Indeed, when crisis does not materialize as quickly or as violently as one might expect it seems civil leadership is not averse to creating "crisis."



However, we are in the midst of crisis. The situation we face today is not economic, environmental, political or sociological. Instead, it is a crisis of leadership at the most elementary level. It is a crisis requiring a dramatic cultural shift in order to correct the course of history. As things now stand we are headed for disaster. Indeed, we are experiencing the slow unfolding of disaster all around us even today.

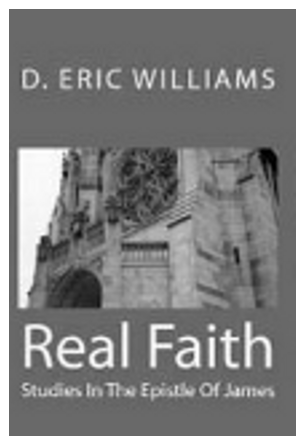
Real Faith

Studies In The Epistle Of James

ISBN/EAN13: 1441436782 / 9781441436788

Page Count: 174

The Epistle of James is all about Faith - real faith, living faith, active faith. Like the apostle Paul, James would have us work out our salvation with fear and trembling. This book endeavors to show how that is done.



According to James' epistle, real faith is based upon certain presuppositions. True faith finds joy in hardship. Faith brings unity in the body; it engenders self control; it benefits the individual and the world at large.

Real Faith, Studies In The Epistle Of James will enable you to read the letter of James with fresh eyes and allow you to apply this misunderstood book to your walk of faith.

I am happy to commend D. Eric Williams' studies in the epistle of James. "Real Faith" is down-to-earth, just like the epistle, and is well-suited to help the reader unpack the kind of practical help that James is known for.

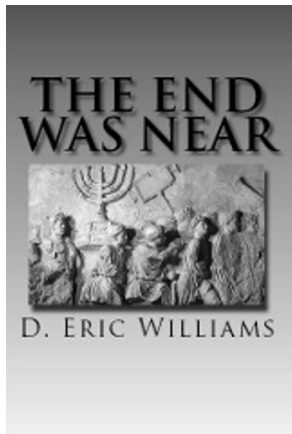
Douglas Wilson

The End Was Near

End Times Bible Prophecy Made Simple

ISBN/EAN13: 1451591209 / 9781451591200

Page Count: 140



Are we living in the Last Days? Are the End Times upon us? Many popular writers confidently say we are the terminal generation - but is that what the Bible says? Find out in this introductory study of biblical eschatology by Pastor and writer D. Eric Williams.

In this brief overview of the topic, Pastor Williams reveals the proper approach to interpreting End Time passages and provides the tools necessary for understanding biblical eschatology.

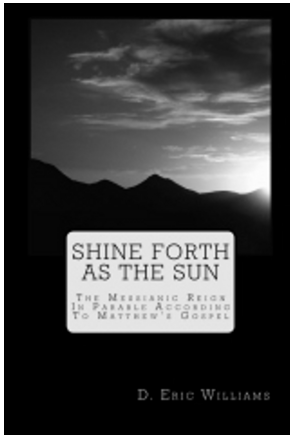
Shine Forth As The Sun

The Messianic Reign In Parable

According To Matthew's Gospel

ISBN/EAN13: 144143772X / 9781441437723

Page Count: 225



The kingdom of God: when will it begin? What are its characteristics? Who will be a part of it? Drawing from the "kingdom is like" parables of our Lord Jesus Christ, Pastor D. Eric Williams examines these questions and more in this collection of sermons concerning the kingdom of God according to Matthew's Gospel.

Heaven Is For Real, The Book Isn't

ISBN/EAN13: 1463774087 / 9781463774080

Page Count: 35

The New York times best selling book, *Heaven Is for Real* outlines the tale of four year old Colton Burpo's emergency surgery for a ruptured appendix and the startling revelations that followed. In the months and years after the successful surgery Colton began to unfold a fantastic story to his parents. But is the account logical - and most important - is it biblical? Find out in the booklet *Heaven Is For Real: The Book Isn't, An Astounding Refutation Of A Story About A Trip To Heaven And Back* by pastor and writer D. Eric Williams. If you've read the best seller, you need to read this critique!