

The Book of Life

When researching “The Book of Life” as part of my study of prophecy, I remember being surprised at how many books were identified as being recorded in heaven. I thought you might enjoy sharing what I learned in that study.

The Psalmist tells us that a special book is set aside just to keep an accounting of our tears. God loves us and makes note of what brings us tears of sorrow and joy.

Psalms 56:8 “You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?”

Psalm 139 is one of my favorite psalms since it records the thought and care that God personally invests in creating each one of us. In fact, our physical attributes and the days allotted to us are recorded in a book at or before conception.

Psalms 139:16 “Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.”

The prophet Malachi tells us that a Book of Remembrance exists that records the names of those who fear the Lord and esteem Him. You would think that the names in this book would mirror those recorded in the Book of Life, but the implication seems to be that they are different.

Malachi 3:16-17 “Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. And they shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serves him.”

Both Ezekiel and John make reference to a couple of books that originated in heaven but were to be consumed by the prophets. This appears to be a unique method used by God to impart to them the prophecies they were to declare.

Ezekiel 2:8–10 “But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.” Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe.”

Revelation 10:8–9 “Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, “Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.” So I went to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.” And he said to me, “Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.”

I can't help but wonder if, based on God's omniscience, there already exists in heaven a set of prerecorded "history" books of events on planet earth from original creation to the creation of the new heavens and new earth.

"God's book" is identified in Exodus. This appears to be the same as the "book of the living," the "book of life" and the "Lamb's Book of Life."

Exodus 32:32–33 "Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written." And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book."

Moses understood that God had a book from which those who were unforgiven would have their name blotted out. God was clear that the individual was accountable regarding the status of his/her name in God's book. Job also knew that there was a record in heaven that could serve to witness to his testimony of himself.

Job 16:19 "Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high."

I can't help but wonder how Moses and Job knew about "the book" and "his record" respectively?

Philippians 4:3 "And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life."

Paul identifies those who co-labor with him in the ministry of the gospel as those whose names are written in the Book of Life. This would seem to go hand in hand with the declaration of the psalmist that the "book of the living" contains the names of the righteous.

Psalms 69:28 "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous."

From both the Old and New Testaments, we are told that sinners, the unrighteous and those who are not overcomers will be blotted out of the Book of Life.

Revelation 3:5 "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

Sinners and the unrighteous are easily understood. But who are overcomers?

1 John 5:4–5 "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Overcomers are those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

John goes on to tell us that the names of those who choose to worship the Antichrist/Satan during the last seven years on earth before Christ returns will not be found in the Book of Life. These people are obviously not overcomers.

Revelation 13:4 & 8 "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?...All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Daniel makes reference to "the book" which also seems to be a reference to the Book of Life. The implication is that the Jewish people whose names are written in this book will eventually be delivered from Jacob's trouble, the last seven years of tribulation before Jesus returns as King.

Daniel 12:1 ""At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book."

Both Daniel and John refer to a set of books that are used in the final judgment. These books contain a record of the works of unbelievers, works that will give evidence to their sin and declare God's righteousness in judging them to eternal condemnation. The Lord will then determine their eternal destiny based upon those works.

Daniel 7:10 "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."

Revelation 20:12 "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."

It seems that the Book of Life is used in conjunction with these books. It also indicates that the Book of Life provides testimony against them because their name is missing. Only those whose names are missing will be judged based upon their own works. Those who have placed their faith in the Savior are judged based upon His work on their behalf.

Romans 5:1-2 "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God."

Through Christ the believer is *justified*—declared righteous, innocent—just as if I'd never sinned.

John goes on to declare that after judgment is determined, those not found in the Book of Life are cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:15 "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

You would tend to think that the lake of fire would mean that the eternal future of every unbeliever will involve suffering of the same scale or intensity. Jesus however made a statement that makes me think this "lake of fire" must have sections that are worse than others.

Matthew 11:21–24 "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

In my opinion, the worst part of the unbeliever's eternity is that it will be spent outside the presence of God. John emphasizes this truth when talking about the New Jerusalem on the new heavens and the new earth.

Revelation 21:27 "But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

The Book of Life is obviously the most important book in heaven's library. One very important truth in connection with the Book of Life that stands out in the scriptures we have looked at is that one's name can be blotted out of it. This tells me that every person's name is there until the Lord has determined it is to be blotted out. It is called the Book of Life, so it stands to reason that every "life" be recorded there until they have rejected God and the eternal life that He has provided for each and every person. God has provided for our salvation, our eternal life; but He has sovereignly decided to allow us the choice of accepting His gift or not.

Ephesians 2:8–9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

I think it is worth reminding ourselves of those precious verses from John 3 at this point as well.

John 3:16–18 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

God is not willing that any should perish. His desire is for every human being to accept His provision through His Son Jesus Christ and choose eternal life by

placing their faith in Him. That is the whole reason He has waited as long as He has to send Jesus back to set up His kingdom.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

Paul emphasizes the truth that God's provision is for all in his letter to the Romans.

Romans 5:18–19 "So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."

"one man's disobedience" = Adam's sin

"obedience of the One" = Jesus death on the cross

Jesus made a very important point to seventy of His disciples upon their return from the mission trip on which He had sent them. They came back all excited about the power they had been able to exert against the evil spirits.

Luke 10:20 "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

To have one's name written in heaven, which seems to be an obvious reference to the Book of Life in light of all the scripture we have looked at, is a far greater reason for rejoicing than any power one might possess in this life.

One more interesting observation--the Book of Life is described as belonging to the Lamb at least three times in Revelation. That makes perfect sense to me. It is only through the willing sacrifice of the Lamb Jesus Christ that any of us can experience eternal life. He is the source of life as the Creator and the restorer and sustainer of life as the victorious Lamb of God.