

A photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. In the foreground, the silhouettes of tall grasses are visible against the darkening beach and sea.

# The Books of Life

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## Introduction

I have often considered different passages concerning the various books mentioned in the Bible concerning eternal life. I realized one day that I had never researched the matter for myself. Some people had undertaken some studies of the Scriptures, but I decided I wanted to pursue the matter in more depth.

As I began my study, I became more and more encouraged with way that God deals with creation, particularly the humans. God used images that we can understand, at least to some degree. I also realized in studying the Book of the Living that Moses had a tremendous love for the rebellious people of God, even to the point where he offered his life in exchange for theirs. David likewise considered himself to have wandered upon the earth, and God knew all of his days from beforehand. I learned many interesting things about the way God used books to help us understand His omniscience lying behind everything.

I also gained a greater appreciation for the precision of Scripture. God never contradicts Himself. Whatever shortcomings abound in this study, they are solely mine. God has produced a wonderful record of all things we need to know concerning God to live in Godliness and joy. As always, I hope you take the time to read through the passages, not just the verses, that I referenced and enjoy the Word of God revealing Himself to us. Regarding this work, examine everything carefully and hold fast to that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

I urge you to have **peace with God.**

January 22, 2017

## **Table of Contents**

- 1. The Books**
- 2. The Book of the Living Ones**
- 3. The Book of Wanderings**
- 4. The Book of the Righteous Ones**
- 5. The Book of Days**
- 6. The Book of Turning Away**
- 7. The Book of Rescue**
- 8. The Book of Remembrance**
- 9. The Book of Life**
- 10. The Book of Life of the Lamb**
- 11. Conclusion**
- 12. Appendix A The Books Related to Life in the Bible**

# 1

## The Books

The Bible contains many statements about various books concerning mankind.<sup>1</sup> In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, we read

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<sup>1</sup>All references to Bible page numbers refer to the study bible. See this link <http://christassembly.org/study-bible>. Because verbs alone in the original languages of the Bible (Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew) often do not express time, the context of each verse and the verbs used there must be examined carefully to determine time references. So, throughout this study, timing can be a very big issue. The books mentioned about men include: (1) The Book of the Living. Psalm 69:28 and Exodus 32:32; contains the names of those alive on earth during any time period; apparently updated as people live and die; (2) The Book of Wanderings. Psalm 56:8; contains the account of the wanderings of man; unknown when written, but perhaps before the man was alive; (3) The Book of the Righteous. Psalm 69:28; contains only the names of the righteous; written during the lifetime of the believer; perhaps the name entered at the moment of salvation; (4) The Book of Days. Psalm 139:16; contains all the days ordained for man; written before man lived; (5) The Book of Turning Away. Jeremiah 17, 13; contains the names of people who have turned away on earth because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even Yahweh; (6) The Book of Remembrance. Malachi 3:16-18; contains the names of people who fear God and esteem Him; used at the judgment to distinguish the righteous from the wicked; written during the physical life of the righteous and wicked); (7) The Book of Life. Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; Revelation 17:8; Revelation 20:15; contains the names of only born-again believers; written before the foundation of the world; probably the same as the Book of Life of the Lamb; and (8) The Book of Life of the Lamb. Revelation 13:8; Revelation 21:27; contains the name of born-again believers; written before the foundation of the world Revelation 13:8. See chart of Books in Appendix A.

## **The Books of Life**

about various books, and some of them concern the concept of life. As we will see, God distinguishes between mortal life on earth and eternal life with Him.

# 2

## The Book of the Living Ones

In the Old Testament, we read about the story of Moses as he led the people of God out of Egypt and through the wilderness. During that journey, Moses often spoke with God about the rebellion of the people of Israel.

**“But now, if You will, forgive their sin--and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written! Yahweh said to Moses, 'Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.'”**

Exodus 32:32-33

## The Books of Life

In Exodus 32:32, we learn about Moses interceding for the people of Israel after they made a golden calf and worshiped it. Moses made God an offer to blot the name of Moses out of God's book, if God would not forgive the great sin of the people of Israel. What book was Moses talking about when he offered to have his name blotted out of it? In order to answer that question, we must first look at Psalm 69:28.

**“May they be blotted out of the book of living ones and may they not be recorded with the righteous.”**

Psalm 69:28

King David wrote Psalm 69:28, which presents the only instance in the Old Testament of the Hebrew phrase "the Book of the Living Ones."<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew word for "living ones" in Psalm 69:28 helps us understand the Old Testament meaning of this Book of Life. The Hebrew word "living ones" found in Psalm 69:28 predominantly refers to people physically alive on earth.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it appears that the Book of Living Ones mentioned in

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<sup>2</sup>The Hebrew phrase for "book of the living ones" ("מִסְפָּר חַיִּים") occurs in only Psalm 69:28.

<sup>3</sup>The usage of the Hebrew word "living ones" ("חַיִּים") in the Old Testament usually means a person physically alive on the earth. We can review a few categories of that usage of the term "living ones." In Genesis 2:7, we read there that God breathed into Adam's nose the breath of living ones ("נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים") and so Adam came to soul life ("לְנַפֵּשׁ חַיָּה"). Similarly,



## The Books of Life

Psalm 69:28 refers to the Book of the Living Ones (people physically alive on the earth at any given time). In this case, one's name would be written in the book at conception and blotted out at physical death.

We must also take notice of the term "blotted out" from the book of life in Psalm 69:28. In Psalm 69, David experienced deep distress caused by his enemies. In that Psalm, David prayed for two related things concerning his enemies: (1) that his enemies would be blotted out of the book of life; and (2) that his enemies would not be recorded with the righteous. Therefore, we may understand that someone's name may be "blotted out" of the book of life. Also, as a separate act, a person's name may be recorded with the righteous, and this verse indicates that record of the righteous may be in a separate book.

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in Genesis 6:17, God used the flood to destroy all flesh in which was the "spirit of living ones" ("רוּחַ חַיִּים"). In Exodus 4:18, Moses wanted to see if his brothers, who were in Egypt, were still living ones ("הַעֹדִים חַיִּים"). Also, in Numbers 16:30, the evil men in the rebellion of Korah the living ones will descend ("וַיִּרְדּוּ חַיִּים") into Sheol. In Deuteronomy 4:10, the Lord called upon Israel to fear Him all the days of the living ones upon the Earth ("חַיִּים עַל-הָאֲדָמָה"). In Ezekiel, the term "living ones" ("חַיִּים") frequently occurs in the phrase "in [the] land of the living ones" ("בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים"), meaning those people alive on earth. At times, however, the term "living ones" ("חַיִּים") can mean something other than physical life on earth. In Psalm 133:3, the Psalmist speaks of the blessings of Yahweh as "living ones to the age" ("חַיִּים עַד-הָעוֹלָם"); even there, the Psalmist explicitly indicated he was speaking of "eternal" living ones and so the verse actually supports the claim that the term "living ones" ("חַיִּים"), outside of Proverbs, predominantly means physical life, when used without an adjective. Likewise, in Proverbs, the Hebrew term "living ones" ("חַיִּים") frequently means spiritual life, and not physical life. Of course, in other contexts, the word for "living ones" ("חַיִּים") can refer to flowing water, among other referents. In 1 Samuel 17:26, the term "living ones" ("חַיִּים") occurs where David proclaimed that Goliath taunted the armies of the living God ("מִמְעַרְכוֹת אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים"). For further study, see [Living Ones](#).

## The Books of Life

This term "blotted out" has special meaning in the Old Testament.<sup>4</sup> God used this root term "blot out" to mean that He would kill every living person on the earth at the time of flood, because they were evil.<sup>5</sup> Even then, God spared some people by providing an ark to save them from the flood. Likewise, God also spoke of raising up offspring for a deceased male of Israel so that the deceased male's name would not be blotted out from Israel.<sup>6</sup> God also instructed Moses to write in a book, and recite it to Joshua, that God would blot out the name of Amalek, but Yahweh would have war against Amalek from generation to generation.<sup>7</sup> Again, the usage of the

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<sup>4</sup>The Hebrew term for "blot out me" ("מָחַוּנִי") means to wipe clean, to remove completely. This same root word is used to wipe clean a mouth (Proverbs 30:20), or to remove tears from a face (Isaiah 25:8). Likewise, Yahweh brings judgment upon the stubborn individual idolater so that Yahweh will "blot out" his name from under heaven (Deuteronomy 29:21).

<sup>5</sup>The Hebrew term in Genesis 6:7, for "blot out" ("אָמַחָה") refers to God Himself saying, "I will blot out man . . . from the face of the earth . . ." This same judgment of removing their name from under heaven appears also in Deuteronomy 9:14, where God intends to destroy the people of Israel and blot out their names under heaven ("וְאָמַחָה אֶת-שְׁמֵם, מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם"); see also similar verses at Deuteronomy 29:20; 2 Kings 14:27; Nehemiah also asked God to remember and not blot out Nehemiah's loyal deeds ("וְאַל-תִּמַּח תְּהַדְוִי") performed for the house of God (Nehemiah 13:14). David prayed for God to blot out his transgressions ("מָחָה כְּפִשְׁעֵי") in Psalm 51:1; see also Psalm 51:9 and Jeremiah 18:23. In all these passages, whenever the verb "blot out" is used regarding people or their names, it always refers to killing them on earth, or causing them to be remembered no more on earth. Likewise, in Genesis 7:23, God flooded the world and blotted out ("וַיִּמַּח") every living thing from the face of the earth.

<sup>6</sup>The Hebrew phrase for "blotted out from Israel" ("וְלֹא-יִמָּחָה שְׁמוֹ, מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל") focused upon the living on earth; see also Judges 21:17, where wives must be provided to Benjamites so that the tribe would not be blotted out from Israel.

<sup>7</sup>In Exodus 17:14, God proclaimed that He will utterly blot out ("כִּי-מָחָה") the memory of Amalek from under heaven. I considered

## The Books of Life

term "blotted out" means that a family may cease to be physically alive on earth, because the family has no more male descendants. Therefore, God commands kinsmen to raise up children to carry on the family name, so that family name will not be blotted out and permanently be removed from the earth. We see that the term "blotted out" means to undergo physical death, and it does not refer to spiritual death. Therefore, we know that to be "blotted out" of the Book of the Living means to suffer physical death on earth, and the Book of Life itself must mean a book containing the names of people physically alive on earth at any given time.<sup>8</sup>

Moses spoke of a book about the people of the Exodus. According to Moses, God personally wrote down the names of people in a book and God personally blots names out of that book.<sup>9</sup> Based upon our study of the term "Book of Life" in Psalm 69:28, we may now try to identify the book Moses mentioned in Exodus 32:32. Moses used the term "blot out" in reference to that book. The only other instance where the term "blot out" occurs in connection with a book in the Old Testament was in Psalm 69:28.

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adding a separate book called the Book of Amalek, but I decided it was not exactly a book of life. Even so, the Book of Amalek presents God's decision to blot out the name of Amalek, yet some descendants remain, so that war continues from generation to generation.

<sup>8</sup>In Psalm 56:8, David wrote that God has taken account ("סָפַרְתָּהּ-אֶתָּה") of David's wanderings, and put David's tears in the bottle of God, and put them into "your Book" ("בְּסֵפֶרְתְּךָ"). David continues on and knows he will triumph over his enemies and walk before God in the light of the living ("בְּאֹר, הַחַיִּים"). Therefore, because of the reference to living on earth before his enemies, and the record of his wanderings and tears on earth, the book described here may be the Book of the Living also, indicating it also records all the wanderings of men and their tears on earth. In the alternative, God may also have another book which I will label the Book of Wanderings.

<sup>9</sup>The Hebrew term "from your book" ("מִסֵּפֶרְךָ") indicates a scroll. Yahweh personally wrote in the book. The Hebrew term for "you have written" ("כָּתַבְתָּ"--Qal perfect) indicates God did the writing.

## The Books of Life

Therefore, we have strong reason to link the book Moses referred to and the book of life described by David. Moses meant that he wanted God to blot out the name of Moses, if God would not forgive the people of their great idolatry with the golden calf. As we have seen above, the term "blot out" means to end his physical life on earth. The context of Exodus 32:32 also fits well with Moses having his physical life ended by his name being blotted out of the Book of Life. God did not accept Moses' offer to be blotted out of God's book. Instead, God responded that whoever sinned against God, God would blot him out of His book.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, God promised to punish the people who sinned against Him.<sup>11</sup> Finally, we read that God "smote" the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the context shows that God blotted people out by killing them, so that their physical lives on earth ended. So, the context fits well with identifying the book Moses described with the same book David mentioned as the Book of Life. We also learn from Exodus 32:33 that sin can cause God to blot people out of his Book of Life. Because this Book of Life refers to the living on earth, I will refer to it as the Book of the Living, to convey the meaning that it deals with those physically alive on earth at any single point in time. The contents of the Book of the Living change often.

We may also learn more about the Book of the Living in Exodus 32. Notice that Yahweh<sup>13</sup> did the writing in the Book of the Living.<sup>14</sup> Moses asked Yahweh personally to blot out his name.<sup>15</sup> This request by Moses

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<sup>10</sup> See Exodus 32:33.

<sup>11</sup> See Exodus 32:34.

<sup>12</sup> See Exodus 32:35.

<sup>13</sup> Yahweh personally wrote in the book. The Hebrew term for "you have written" ("כָּתַבְתָּ")--Qal perfect) indicates God did the writing.

<sup>14</sup> The Hebrew term "from your book" ("מִסְפָּרְךָ") indicates a scroll.

<sup>15</sup> The Hebrew term for "blot out me" ("מְחֵנֵנִי")--Qal imperative) from that book.

## The Books of Life

shows that Moses expected Yahweh Himself had the power to blot out names from the book. Notice also their sin<sup>16</sup> caused God to blot out the name of the sinner from the Book of the Living, which contained the names of all people living on earth.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, we see that Moses offered his physical life to God, if God would not forgive the people. Moses did not offer to forsake his eternal salvation, because the book Moses referred to was the Book of the Living, that is, the Book of the people physically alive on earth at that time.

Therefore, we see that God apparently has a book containing all the names of every person born on earth. God Himself makes choices about blotting out the names of the living upon the earth from that Book of the Living. Although Moses certainly sinned, God never threatened Moses with having his name blotted out of the Book of the Living. In Exodus 32, the people of Israel had worshiped a golden calf while Moses received the tablets bearing the Ten Commandments. Moses then sought to make atonement<sup>18</sup> for the sins of the nation of Israel. Moses had great concern that God may destroy the entire nation for the entire nation's sin of idolatry

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<sup>16</sup>The Hebrew term for "sin" ("חַטָּאת") conveys the idea of idolatry and rebellion in this context.

<sup>17</sup>The Hebrew construct used for "sinned against Me" ("חַטָּאת־לִי") in Exodus 32:33, means to fall short of a mark, to be wrong morally, and to be guilty before God.

<sup>18</sup>In Exodus 32:30, Moses spoke to the people of Israel after they sinned with the idol of the golden calf. In that verse, Moses told them "perhaps I will make atonement for your sins" ("אולי אכפרה בעד חטאתכם"). The Hebrew text indicates the uncertainty in the mind of Moses about God's willingness to withhold punishment from His people for their great sin of idolatry. Moses understood the flagrant, corporate sin of Israel, and sought to give his own physical life in exchange for the nation's survival, illuminating the great love of Moses to lay down his life for his brethren. Yet, God did not allow one sinful human (Moses) to atone for the sin of the nation of Israel. Yahweh reserved that role of Savior exclusively for Jesus as the God-Man, the final and perfect sacrifice for sin.

## The Books of Life

with the golden calf. God responded, however, that He would judge each individual for sin, and not blot out the entire nation for this sinful disaster.<sup>19</sup>

### Book of the Living--Summary

1. Every Birth. At the time of birth, God Himself apparently records in the Book of the Living every live birth on earth.
2. God Himself Records and Removes. God Himself wrote down every individual born under heaven into the Book of the Living. We know this fact because every individual name of the people of Israel could be removed individually from the Book of the Living.
3. Individual Sin. One single sin can cause God to blot out that sinner's name from the Book of the Living, but God decides which sin may cause a sinner's name to be blotted out.
4. Not Every Sin. God exercises perfect, loving judgment in the decision to blot out a name from the Book of the Living. Not every sin requires that sinner's name to be removed from the Book of the Living, because Moses sinned, and his name was not blotted out in Exodus 32.
5. Distinction. The Book of the Living may be distinguished from other books because this Book of the Living has every name written in it, and only God records births and blots out names as a judgment for individual, not corporate, sin.

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<sup>19</sup>This concept of God ending the physical life of people also appears in the New Testament. Consider 1 Corinthians 11:28-30, where God speaks about people "sleeping" (they died) because of their sin at the Lord's table. Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 5:5, Paul decided to "deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." Notice that sin can produce physical death. Compare also the sin leading to death in 1 John 5:16, where the believer may sin and die physically as a result.

# 3

## The Book of Wanderings

King David received great revelations from God about his royal life and enjoyed a very close relationship with God. In Psalm 56:8, David disclosed that God has counted all of his "wanderings" on earth and they were recorded in a particular book.<sup>20</sup> Even so, he wept, and God placed the tears of David in God's bottle. David knew Yahweh as a personal, loving God, concerned about all of his wanderings and tears. God knew all about them, and was always ready to help. Wherever David fled before Saul and later as he fled from his own children in rebellion, David counted upon Yahweh for deliverance.

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<sup>20</sup>The Hebrew phrase "You have counted" ("סָפַרְתָּהּ-אֶתָּה") explains David's confidence here. The total term "have counted" ("סָפַרְתָּהּ"--"qal perfect for "have taken account") and the "you" ("אֶתָּה"--may be emphatic here) combined with "are they not in your book" ("הֲלֹא, בְּסֵפֶרְתְּךָ") implies that God knows the sum of his wanderings and has written them down before they occurred, because David took comfort from these thoughts, as he relied upon God for deliverance.

## The Books of Life

**“You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not recorded in Your book?”**

Psalm 56:8

Samuel the prophet anointed David king, because his predecessor, King Saul, rejected the word of Yahweh and so Yahweh rejected Saul from being king over Israel.<sup>21</sup> Shortly after God rejected King Saul, Samuel anointed the young shepherd boy David as king of Israel in a private ceremony at Bethlehem, the hometown of Jesse, the father of David.<sup>22</sup> Later, King Saul watched young David kill Goliath the giant, the champion of the Philistines who taunted the armies of the living God.<sup>23</sup> King Saul soon grew jealous of David after the people sang that Saul had killed his thousands, but David had killed his ten thousands.<sup>24</sup> King Saul eventually tried to kill David, but David's wife Michal (King Saul's daughter) helped him escape from King Saul. David fled to Gath, the hometown of Goliath. There, David pretended to be insane, because he feared Achish, the king of Gath. In Psalm 56:8, David wrote about his time in Gath. He felt oppressed and trampled upon by his enemies, but David trusted in God alone. David knew that God was for him. In this context, David wrote that God had taken account of all his wanderings, put his tears into God's bottle, and recorded

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<sup>21</sup>See 1 Samuel 15:26 and the entire story in that chapter.

<sup>22</sup>See 1 Samuel 16:12-13.

<sup>23</sup>See 1 Samuel 17:31-58.

<sup>24</sup>See 1 Samuel 18:7.



## The Books of Life

all his wanderings in God's book.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, this book, which I shall call the Book of Wanderings, contains all the wanderings of David during his lifetime on earth, and appears to have been written before David wandered. David apparently took comfort and courage that God has a complete record of his wanderings on earth, apparently giving David confidence that one day he would be king, because God had already anointed David for that purpose.<sup>26</sup>

### Book of Wanderings--Summary

1. Account. God has taken account of the wanderings of David.
2. Written. Apparently all the days of David's life are recorded in the Book of Wanderings.
3. Comfort. David took comfort knowing that all his wanderings were recorded by God in the Book of Wanderings.

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<sup>25</sup> The Hebrew term for "wandering" ("נדד") means the wanderings, particularly the wanderings of an outcast or fugitive. God used this root word to describe the wanderings of Cain, after he killed Abel, and described a land of wanderings where Cain went (Genesis 4:12-16). God also knows all the "wanderings" of Israel through the wilderness (Deuteronomy 2:7).

<sup>26</sup> See 1 Samuel 15:12-13.

# 4

## The Book of the Righteous Ones

In Psalm 69:28, King David wrote about his enemies, who hated him without cause. They were more numerous than the hairs of his head. We have discussed the Book of the Living Ones mentioned in Psalm 69:28 above. Now we will focus upon the record of the righteous in the same verse. This verse helps us with timing issues regarding when the two books were written.

**“May they be blotted out of the book of life and may they not be recorded with the righteous.”**

Psalm 69:28

David petitioned God that his enemies would not be "recorded with the righteous." As we have seen above, at the same time David prayed for

## The Books of Life

his enemies to be blotted out of the Book of the Living, David also prayed for enemies not be written in the Book of the Righteous. Therefore, we know that his enemies had not yet been recorded in the Book of the Righteous. The timing here helps us distinguish this book for New Testament books written before the foundation of the world.

### Book of the Righteous--Summary

1. Evil People. David prayed that God would not include his enemies in the Book of the Righteous.
2. Written. The Book of Righteousness was apparently written during the lifetime of the righteous, or perhaps later.
3. Book of Living Contrasted. David prayed that his enemies would be blotted out of the Book of the Living, meaning he wanted God to take their physical life. He also wanted God not to write their names in the Book of the Righteous. Notice that evil names had not been written previously in the Book of the Righteous, because David knew they had not been written there as of the date he prayed for their names to be blotted out of the Book of the Living. Therefore, the Book of the Righteous overlaps the Book of the Living with names written in both during the lifetime of the believer. David does not pray the names would be blotted out of the Book of the Righteous.

# 5

## The Book of Days

In Psalm 139:16, we learn that all the days of each individual's life on earth are recorded in a particular book.

**“Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.”**

Psalm 69:28

David wrote about a special book written before he was born. In fact, David knew that the eyes of God had seen his unformed substance.<sup>27</sup> The Book of the Living appears to be a book that has your name written at conception

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<sup>27</sup>The Hebrew term here for "unformed substance" ("אֵלֶּם") does not appear elsewhere in the Old Testament in that form. The root may mean "embryo." The point is that God sees the development of human life.

## The Books of Life

and then blotted out at death. This book mentioned in Psalm 139:16, was written before conception or birth.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it does seem to fit with the Book of the Living because it was written at a different time. Therefore, I will label it the Book of the Days. The number of days of our lives are "ordained" by God.<sup>29</sup> Notice here that all our days were ordained by God and a record of all those days were written in the Book of Days before there was one of those days, that is, before we were even born and had our first day.

### Book of Days--Summary

1. Unformed Substance. David knew that God's eyes have seen his unformed substance.
2. Written. The Book of Days was written before David was conceived, that is, when there was not yet one of his days.
3. Content. The Book of Days contains a complete record of all the days David lived on earth. As he wept and went through difficult times, He knew that all his days were already recorded in the Book of Days, which displays God's omniscience.
3. Book of Living Contrasted. The Book of the Living contains the names of everyone alive on earth at any given time. The Book of Days, in contrast, was written before the first day of David's life on earth. So, we know that this Book of Days could not be the same book as the Book of the Living because they were written at different times. Furthermore, because the Book of the Righteous was written during the lifetime of David or later, the Book of Days could not be the same as the Book of the Righteous.

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<sup>28</sup>See Psalm 139:14.

<sup>29</sup>The Hebrew term "ordained" ("יִצְרָה") means created, formed, or fashioned. In Isaiah 45:9, God used the same term to describe earthenware created by a potter; God symbolized humans talking back to God, their Creator, as a pot talking back to the Potter.

# 6

## The Book of Turning Away

In Jeremiah 17:13, we read about the people of Judah turning away from Yahweh.<sup>30</sup>

**“Yahweh, the hope of Israel, all who forsake You will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, because they have forsaken the foundation of living water, even Yahweh.”**

Jeremiah 17:13

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<sup>30</sup>See also Jeremiah 2:13 about the two errors of Israel: (1) they have forsaken the fountain of living waters; and (2) they have hewn out broken cisterns that can hold no water.

## The Books of Life

God proclaimed that the sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus; with a diamond point it is engraved upon the tablet of their heart and on the horns of their altars. God described the effect of Judah's idolatry upon their hearts and their idolatrous altars of worship. The people of Judah had become utterly corrupt. Their hearts were so hardened that it took an iron stylus with a diamond point to engrave those stony hearts.<sup>31</sup>

God then confronted Jeremiah and spoke to him concerning human hearts. God declared the heart more deceitful than all else and desperately wicked; who can understand it?<sup>32</sup> Jeremiah then responded to God and recognized Yahweh on His glorious throne on high from the beginning. In Him alone resides the hope of Israel. Yet, all who forsake Yahweh will be put to shame.<sup>33</sup> I pondered whether Jeremiah 17:13 referred back to writing

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<sup>31</sup>Jeremiah 17:1.

<sup>32</sup>Jeremiah 17:9.

<sup>33</sup>The Hebrew phrase “who forsake You will be put to shame” (“כָּל-עֹזְבֵיךָ יִבְשׁוּ”) refers to: (1) the date when people were forsaking Yahweh; and (2) a later date when the idolaters will be put to shame. Likewise, those same people were presently turning away on earth from Yahweh (“יִסּוּרֵי (וְסוּרֵי) בְּאֶרֶץ”). I understand that placing time restraints upon individual verbs in Hebrew may be problematic. In this case, the verb “they will be put to shame” (“יִבְשׁוּ”) occurs as a Qal imperfect. As an imperfect, in this context it apparently refers to a future event. The juxtaposition of perfect with imperfect forms in this verse distinguishes present events from future events. They will be put to shame in the future, but not necessarily at the moment they forsake or turn away from Yahweh. Likewise, the verb “they shall be written” (“יִכְתְּבוּ”) also occurs as a Niphal imperfect, indicating that, in the future, their names will be written down, because they have turned away from Yahweh, and in the future they will be put to shame. So, the order of events appears to be: (1) the people committed idolatry; (2) they forsook and turned away from Yahweh; (3) their names will be written down; and (4) they will be put to shame. Psalm 69:28 also has the same Hebrews word for “written” (“יִכְתְּבוּ”). In Psalm 69:28, the Hebrews Niphal form has a jussive force, indicating that the Psalmist does not want the names of the wicked recorded with the righteous.

## The Books of Life

upon the hearts of the people in Jeremiah 17:1. I noticed that Jeremiah 17:13 referred to writing down “names,” and not “sins.”<sup>34</sup> In Jeremiah 17:1, the “sins” of the people of Judah were written upon their hearts and their altars. In Jeremiah 17:13, God wrote down the “names” of the people who turn away from Yahweh. Therefore, I concluded that God wrote a book containing the names of the people who turn away from Yahweh, the fountain of living water.

I also noticed in Jeremiah 17:13 that the people who forsook and turned away<sup>35</sup> on earth<sup>36</sup> from Yahweh opposed those people, like Jeremiah,

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<sup>34</sup>Psalm 69:28 also has the same Hebrew word for “written” (“אֶל-יִכְתְּבוּ” “not written”) concerning a book. In Psalm 69:28, the Hebrew Niphal form has a jussive force, indicating that David, the Psalmist, does not want the names of the wicked recorded with the righteous. The names of the wicked shall be blotted out of the book of life. Psalm 69:28 supports the interpretation that a separate book is in view in Jeremiah 17:13 because the same Niphal verb is used in both places. So, rather than a reflexive meaning of the Niphal (written by themselves or in their own hearts) in Jeremiah 17:3, it seems better to go with a meaning of writing in a book, as described in Psalm 69:28. In Ezekiel 13:9, God also declared that every false prophet in Israel would have no place in the council of My people (“בְּסוֹד עַמִּי לֹא-יִהְיוּ”), neither will they be written in the register of Israel (“וּבְכֹתֵב בֵּית-יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִכְתְּבוּ”), and shall not enter the land of Israel. This book of the registry of Israel may refer to a book of life, but it may be more like the registry of the exiles found in Ezra 2:1-60.

<sup>35</sup>The Hebrew term “turn away” (“סוּרִי”) means to defect. Consider Hosea 7:14, where Yahweh rebukes Israel for their failure to repent of their evil deeds. They assemble themselves for grain and new wine, but they turn away from Me (“סוּרוּבִי”), says Yahweh.

<sup>36</sup>The Hebrew term “on earth” (“בְּאֶרֶץ”) may be taken to mean that their names were written in the earth (loose soil), but it seems better to me to take the word to mean they forsook Yahweh while living on the earth (or in the land of Judah). Symbolically, He referred to their earthly lifetimes. The term occurs in the Hebrew text of Jeremiah 17:13 between the term for “turned away” and “will be written down.” Jeremiah used the same term “on earth” (“בְּאֶרֶץ”) to describe not only



## The Books of Life

who called upon Yahweh to heal them and save them. The people who turned away from Yahweh said to Jeremiah: “Where is the word of Yahweh? Let it come now!” Jeremiah prayed that his opponents would be put to shame and dismayed and finally destroyed. Therefore, I concluded further that those who turn away from Yahweh are not merely people backsliding for just a while, but they adamantly oppose everyone who seeks healing and salvation from Yahweh and deserve eternal destruction. The opponents love their idolatry. God writes down the names of people who forsake Him and turn away from Him, the fountain of living waters.

### Book of Turning Away--Summary

1. Forsake Yahweh, Turn Away. The defining characteristic of the people written in this Book of Turning Away is that they have forsaken Yahweh and turned away from Yahweh.
2. Written Down. The Book of Turning Away will be written down at the time (or later) people turn away from Yahweh.
3. Content. The Book of Turning Away contains a complete record of all the people who have turned away from Yahweh on earth, and forsaken the fountain of living water, even Yahweh. This book lists the names of the

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the land of Benjamin in Judah, but also the desert in Jeremiah 2:6 and the land of exile in Jeremiah 17:4; Jeremiah used the term “in the land” (“בְּאֶרֶץ”) more than sixty times, and only in Jeremiah 32:41 does that term seem to mean that God planted the people in the land, perhaps like you would plant a tree. All other uses in Jeremiah seem to support the meaning of describing a geographical place, where people lived or could walk upon the land. Also in Jeremiah 17:1, Jeremiah described writing “upon” (“עַל-לִיֹּהֵט”) the tablet of the heart, not “in” the tablet of the heart (see Deuteronomy 6:6, “upon their heart” (“עַל-לִבְבָהֶם”). Therefore, I prefer the meaning of “on earth” to describe the entire realm of the earth, and to emphasize that these people were living upon the earth at that time, although I understand the primary referent in Jeremiah 17:13 must be the people of God living in Jerusalem and Judah.

## **The Books of Life**

people of Judah who forsook Yahweh during the days of Jeremiah, and perhaps the names of all people on earth who have forsaken Yahweh.

3. Book of Turning Away Contrasted. The Book of the Living contains the names of everyone alive on earth at any given time. The Book of Turning Away was written down as (or after) each person turned away from Yahweh. So, we know that this Book of Days could not be the same book as the Book of the Turning Away because they were written at different times. Furthermore, the Book of the Living concerns blotting out names and removing names from the Book of the Living. In contrast, the names of people are added to the Book of the Turning Away at or after they fully and finally turn away from God (see the contrast to the names of the righteous added to the Book of the Righteous). Although the Book of the Living bears similarities to the Book of Turning Away, they are not the same. God blots out from the Book of the Living the names of each person who sins, and then that person's life on earth ends in death. The Book of Turning Away does not indicate that each person turning away immediately died. Of course, their destruction was not far away with the invading army coming soon.

# 7

## The Book of Rescue

In Daniel 12:1, Daniel received a revelation from God about a future time of unprecedented distress. Daniel prophesied that at that time, Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the people of Israel, will arise.

**“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.”**

Daniel 12:2

## The Books of Life

Daniel described the time of distress such as never occurred since the nation until that time. But Daniel also provided good news: everyone who is written in the book will be rescued.<sup>37</sup> This time of rescue appears linked to the time when these believers rescued from distress will be awakened and raised to eternal life. Others will be awakened to disgrace and everlasting contempt.<sup>38</sup> The rescue may be purely a resurrection to life or to judgment (with disgrace and everlasting contempt).<sup>39</sup> We know that this Book of Rescue had the names written in it sometime before the time of distress; the exact time remains unclear. Only born-again believers have their names written in the Book of Rescue. The Book of Rescue only has names from the nation of Israel written in it.<sup>40</sup>

### Book of Rescue--Summary

1. Distress. Daniel prophesied concerning a time of distress never before experienced in Israel, and he had lived through the total conquest of

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<sup>37</sup>The Hebrew term for "in [the] book" ("בְּסֵפֶר") is a common term for book in the Old Testament.

<sup>38</sup>The Hebrew phrase for "disgrace and everlasting contempt" ("לְחַרְפוֹת לְדָרְאוֹן עוֹלָם") describes the resurrection to judgment, followed by eternal shame and suffering. See the discussion of Gehena and the Lake of Fire below.

<sup>39</sup>In Zechariah 12:10, God pours out the Spirit of grace and supplication, which causes the living Jews to look upon Jesus who they have pierced, and mourn for their rejection of Messiah. Then, God will bring eternal life to those Jews so that from the least of them to the greatest of them, they will all know the Lord. See Jeremiah 31:34 for the New Covenant promise with the house of Israel and the house of Jacob. Also, only one third of the Jews in the land of Israel will survive the tribulation period (Zechariah 13:8).

<sup>40</sup>I understand that God promises that Gentiles will be included in the people of God (Ephesians 2:11-22). I cannot argue with people who find this verse, and the Book of Rescue, to include all believers (both Jews and Gentiles) on that basis. In this context, however, the primary referent appears to be the people protected by Michael, the people of Israel.

## The Books of Life

Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Everyone having their names written in the Book of Rescue will be raised.

2. Rescue. The Book of Rescue contains the names of everyone who will be rescued from the time of great distress, but those names will only be born-again believers.

3. Content. The names recorded in the Book of Rescue contain only Jews from the nation of Israel, and those Jews were apparently alive at the time of the unprecedented distress.

4. Book of Living Contrasted. The Book of the Living contains the names of everyone alive on earth at any given time. The Book of Rescue, in contrast, was written before the time of great distress coming upon Israel in the future. Furthermore, the Book of Rescue only contains the names of Jews from the nation of Israel. Therefore, the Book of the Living is not the same book as the Book of Rescue.

# 8

## The Book of Remembrance

In Malachi 3:16, we read about a Book of Remembrance.<sup>41</sup> Malachi described a book concerning people who feared Yahweh.

**“Then those who feared Yahweh spoke to one another, and Yahweh gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear Yahweh and who esteem Him.”**

Malachi 3:16

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<sup>41</sup>The Hebrew phrase there for "Book of Remembrance" ("סֵפֶר זִכְרוֹן") means a book used to remind the reader.

## The Books of Life

In the same verse, we also learn about the exclusive nature of that book. Only those who "fear Yahweh" and "esteem Him" will have their names written in the Book of Remembrance.<sup>42</sup> Yahweh very selectively chose the people whose names would be recorded in the Book of Remembrance. Yahweh directed that those names be written down in the Book of Remembrance before Him.<sup>43</sup>

In Malachi 3:17, we read: "They will be Mine." This phrase summarized well the purpose for memorializing the people who "feared" and "esteemed" Yahweh. When Yahweh prepares His possession, He will spare the people named in His Book of Remembrance as a man spares his son who serves him.

Notice that we learn further in Malachi 3:18 that Yahweh will rely upon this Book of Remembrance when He "again will distinguish between

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<sup>42</sup>The Hebrew phrase for "fear Yahweh" ("לִירֵא יְהוָה") (notice the masculine noun for "fear" in construct with Yahweh) used a common word for "fear" and here it stands directly related to "esteem Him" ("לְהִשָּׁבֵי שְׂמוֹ" - -qal participle). Taken together, only those who have an abiding "fear" of Yahweh and "esteem" Yahweh will have their names recorded in the Book of Remembrance. The term for "before Him" ("לְפָנָיו") means literally before His face, and in this context indicated that Yahweh had the Book of Remembrance written down before Him, apparently at the time the living men "feared" and "esteemed" Yahweh. Notice in Malachi 3:17 that the book appears to be written after the people on earth speak to one another as people who fear Yahweh; they speak and then Yahweh gave attention and heard it, and then the book was written. The sequence of events here distinguishes this Book of Remembrance from the Book of Life mentioned in the New Testament. The Book of Life in the New Testament was written before the foundation of the world. Therefore, this Book of Remembrance may focus more upon the works of those people who fear and esteem Yahweh.

<sup>43</sup>The purpose behind the Book of Remembrance may be seen clearly in Malachi 3:17.

## The Books of Life

the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him." This time of judgment seems very similar to the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-46. At that time of judgment, Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats. The sheep will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, while the goats will be cast into eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Likewise, the sheep gained favor with Jesus when they helped the foreigner, hungry, naked, thirsty and imprisoned. To honor those people was the same as honoring Jesus. Likewise, to ignore those people, would be to dishonor Jesus. The righteous enter eternal life, and the wicked enter eternal punishment.<sup>44</sup>

### Book of Remembrance--Summary

1. Yahweh Heard. Yahweh heard those who feared Yahweh speaking to one another and Yahweh wrote a book of remembrance.
2. Yahweh Had the Book of Remembrance Written in the Presence of God. The Book of Remembrance was written in the presence of Yahweh.
3. Written for Them. Yahweh wrote the Book of Remembrance for those people who fear Yahweh.
4. Content. The Book of Remembrance concerns the people who fear Yahweh and esteem Him.

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<sup>44</sup>In Revelation 20:12, Jesus sits upon a great white throne for judgment. Only unbelievers appear for judgment at the great white throne (see discussion below concerning the Book of Life). Books will be opened, including the Book of Life, which was written before the foundation of the world, and contains the names of the righteous (Philippians 4:3; compare Psalm 69:28). Therefore, it seems likely that Book of Remembrance will also be opened at that time, because God will use it to judge the unsaved, as He said in Malachi 3:18.



# 9

## The Book of Life

We also read about a Book of Life in the New Testament. Born-again believers have their names written in the New Testament Book of Life. In Philippians 4:3, we read about Clement and the rest of Paul's fellow workers, whose names are written the Book of Life.<sup>45</sup>

**“Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are written in the book of life.”**

Philippians 4:3

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<sup>45</sup>The Greek phrase for "book of life" ("βίβλω ζωῆς") here refers to believers who already have their names written the "book of life." In the Johannine literature of the New Testament, John used the word "life" ("ζωῆς") exclusively for spiritual, eternal life; compare the usage of the Old Testament term for "life" ("חַיִּים") which meant physical, earthly life. For example, Jesus called himself the bread of life ("ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς") in John 6:35. In John 8:12, Jesus called Himself the Light of Life ("τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς").

## The Books of Life

Therefore, we know that Paul's fellow believers had their names written in the Book of life. Although Euodia and Syntyche may not have been living in harmony when Paul wrote Philippians, he certainly understood that their names were written in the Book of Life. In this context, it does not seem likely that Paul was only talking about physical life here on earth, but rather eternal life with Christ Jesus. Because Clement and the rest of the Paul's fellow workers had struggled with Paul in sharing the gospel, they will also receive the benefit of the gospel, eternal life signified here by having their names written in the Book of Life. The Book of Revelation has more references to the Book of Life.

**“He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”**

Revelation 3:5

The Book of Revelation contains many great blessings for every overcomer. Not only will they be clothed with white garments, but they also have a promise of eternal life. In Revelation 3:5, we also read that God will

## The Books of Life

not<sup>46</sup> "erase"<sup>47</sup> the name of an overcomer from the Book of life. Some interpreters suggest that the opposite must also be true. Namely, they teach that God can erase the names of some people out of this Book of Life. Yet, in Revelation 3:5, John emphasized the exact opposite of that teaching: God never erases an overcomer's name from the Book of Life. People have offered a wide variety of explanations regarding the identity of the overcomer described in the Book of Revelation. Furthermore, throughout his writings in the New Testament, and particularly here in Revelation 3:5, John used the term "life" to describe the Book of Life, which contains only the names of born-again believers.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, we know that the Book of Life records the names of everyone who has spiritual, eternal life. In contrast, we noted above that the Old Testament Book of the Living contains a record of everyone physically alive on earth at any given time. Therefore, although the two books have similar names, one refers to the Book of the Living which records the names of those now alive on earth (at any given point) and the Book of Life which records the names of those who have eternal life. So, from Revelation 3:5 alone, we know that: (1) God clothes overcomers in white garments; and (2) Jesus will confess their names before His Father and before the Father's angels; and (3) the names of the overcomers are written in the Book of Life; and (4) God will never

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<sup>46</sup>The Greek phrase for not ("οὐ μὴ"--with the indicative following) emphasizes the absolute promise, under all possible circumstances, that God will not erase.

<sup>47</sup>The Greek term for "erase" ("ἐξαλείψω") has an interesting usage in the New Testament. In Colossians 2:14, the term "having cancelled out" ("ἐξαλείψας--notice the aorist participle) indicates the total and complete act of having cancelled the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us. In Revelation 7:17, the same root term means that Jesus "will wipe away" ("ἐξαλείψει") every tear from the eyes of every soul under the altar. Likewise, in Revelation 21:4, God will wipe away ("ἐξαλείψει") every tear from the eye of every believer in the new Jerusalem. In Acts 3:19, Peter urged the crowd to repent and return to God, so that your sins "may be wiped away" ("ἐξαλειφθῆναι").

<sup>48</sup>See footnote 2 above.

## **The Books of Life**

erase the name of an overcomer from the Book of Life. All of those characteristics of the overcomers all pertain to spiritual, eternal life, and fully support the conclusion that the Book of Life only contains the names of born-again believers, and their names will never be erased from the Book of Life.

### Book of Life (New Testament)--Summary

1. The Names of Believers. The names of born-again believers are recorded in the Book of Life.
2. The Names of Overcomers Will Never Be Blotted Out. God promised He would never blot out the names of overcomers from the Book of Life. Every born-again believer is an overcomer.
3. Jesus Will Confess the Names of Overcomers before the Father. Jesus promised He would confess the names of overcomers before His Father in heaven.

# 10

## The Book of Life of the Lamb

In Revelation 13:8 we read about the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.<sup>49</sup>

**“All who dwell on earth will worship him, everyone whose name has been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.”**

Revelation 13:8

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<sup>49</sup>The Greek phrase for "book of life of the Lamb who has been slain" ("τῷ βιβλίῳ ἧς ζωῆς οὐ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου") ties this book of life with the Lamb.

## The Books of Life

Throughout the Book of Revelation, the Lamb alone is worthy to open the book with seven seals and to judge the living and the dead, because the Lamb was slain, and came back to life, and the Lamb alone purchased with His blood people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation on earth.<sup>50</sup> This singular connection between the Lamb and the people He purchased with His blood underlies the Book of Life of the Lamb. A question also arises about the whether the phrase "before foundation of the world" describes the timing of: (1) the death of the Lamb; or (2) the writing of the names in the Book of Life of the Lamb. The best explanation seems to be that the names were written in the Book of Life of the Lamb before the foundation of the world.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Revelation 5:8.

<sup>51</sup>The question of whether the phrase "before the foundation of the world" describes: (1) when the Lamb was slain; or (2) when the names were written in the book depends upon several technical factors. In the end, the technical arguments based upon a finite verb plus a participle, and the intervening words between the clauses, do not seem to outweigh the similar usage by the same author in the same book at Revelation 17:8, where the names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world. Therefore, the best conclusion seems to be that the names were written in the Book of Life of the Lamb before the foundation of the world.

## The Books of Life

**“The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.”**

Revelation 17:8

In Revelation 17:8, we learn that "those who dwell on earth<sup>52</sup> and "whose name had not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world <sup>53</sup> will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come." This verse ties in closely with Revelation 13:8 because we see there very similar descriptions of people who worship the beast: (1) they dwell upon earth; and (2) their names have not been written in either the

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<sup>52</sup>Notice the limitation here: only people alive on earth at that time. The focus here is not upon spiritual acts in heaven, but rather physical acts of spiritual worship on earth.

<sup>53</sup>The Greek phrase "had not been written" ("οὐ γέγραπται"--perfect tense) describes an act in the past with continuing results. The significance of the perfect tense here emphasizes those names were not written in the past and then removed from the Lamb's Book of Life. Therefore, the verse indicates that those names, before the foundation of the world, were never written the Book of Life of the Lamb, and they have not been written since then in the Lamb's Book of Life.

## The Books of Life

book of life of the lamb or the book of life; and (3) they will worship or wonder at the beast.<sup>54</sup>

The question arises: is the Book of Life the same as the Book of Life of the Lamb? We certainly have evidence here that both books were written before the foundation of the world, and that anyone who worships or wonders at the beast never had their names written in the Book of Life or the Book of Life of the Lamb. Based upon the substantial similarities between the two verses, a strong claim can be made that the Book of Life in Revelation 13:8 is the same as the Book of Life of the Lamb in Revelation 17:8. In both contexts, born-again believers distinguish themselves by their reaction to the beast. Those people do not worship the beast or wonder at the beast, like all the unsaved people. The other uses of the term "book" in Revelation also support the conclusion they are the same Book. Only the names of born-again believers have their names written in the Book of Life and the Book of the Lamb. Only those born-again believers will not worship the beast (Revelation 13:8). Only those born-again believers will not wonder when they see the beast. Therefore, the born-again believers are linked to being in the Book of Life, and the Book of Life was written before the foundation of the world, just like the Book of Life of the Lamb was written before the foundation of the world. Because of these similarities between the two books, they appear to be same Book with similar names.

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<sup>54</sup>Two Greek phrases need attention here: (1) "whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain" ("οὐ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου") (Revelation 13:8); and (2) "whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world" ("ὧν οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου") (Revelation 17:8). Notice several similarities: "not written," "before the foundation of the world," "book of life" (dative and accusative cases, both with the definite article)--all of these phrases are nearly identical in the Greek text. Based upon these similar descriptions, these verses may refer to the same book, using the short name Book of Life (Revelation 17:8) or the longer name Book of Life of the Lamb.



## The Books of Life

Apparently, in Revelation 13:8, the names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world (and not emphasizing that the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world). In that verse, we read that the people there worship the beast because their names were not written in the "book of life of the Lamb." God emphasized in that verse that all unbelievers will worship with beast. God identified these people as those individuals whose names were never written in "book of life of the Lamb."<sup>55</sup> Please recall that the names of the people written in the Lamb's Book of Life were written into that Book before the foundation of the world. God knows all things and by His sovereign power He ultimately controls all things, so that He can reveal the future without error.

**“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.”**

Revelation 20:11

Revelation 20 presented the solemn scene of the great white throne judgment. Heaven and earth have fled away at the presence of Him who sat on the throne, and no place was found for them.

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<sup>55</sup>Notice the words "had not been written." The Greek phrase for "had not been written" ("οὐ γέγραπται") is a perfect, passive indicative. The use of the perfect tense here means that those names were not written in the past and then removed, but rather they were never written in the book of life of the Lamb. Please remember that the book of life of the Lamb was written before the foundation of the world. Therefore, this verse shows that those names of the unbelievers were never written in eternity past, before the foundation of the world.

## The Books of Life

Only non-believers will appear before the great white throne for judgment, because at the moment of salvation by faith alone, believers have passed out of judgment and into life.<sup>56</sup> Salvation by faith alone only happens on earth, at the moment a person trusts Jesus for salvation by hearing and believing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel means that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and then was raised from the dead, all according to the Scriptures.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Jesus taught in John 5:24 that everyone who hears the word of Jesus and believes the Father Who sent Jesus, has passed out of death and into eternal life. They do not come into judgment, because they already have passed out of death into life. Notice that believers never face judgment concerning eternal life, because they already have it. Furthermore, Jesus continued His teaching by noting that in the future, all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; believers go to a resurrection of life and unbelievers go to a resurrection of judgment. The unbelievers will be judged according to their works, which were evil (John 5:28-29). See also the judgment of unbelievers, according to the Gospel of Paul. Paul taught that God has fixed a day when God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ (Romans 2:16); compare Acts 17:31, where God will judge the world in righteousness through a Man, Whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.

<sup>57</sup>1 Corinthians 15:1-5.

## The Books of Life

**“And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.**

Revelation 20:12

As the dead, the great and the small, stood before the great white throne, books were opened.<sup>58</sup> Notice the plural for books. More than one book will be opened at the great white throne judgment. In this study, we have seen several books written for different purposes. Now we know that some of those books were written to condemn the unbelievers by their own deeds. People fall greatly and sin profoundly when they fail to seek God, preferring instead their own wicked ways. They have no fear of God before their eyes.<sup>59</sup>

In Revelation 20:15, the content of the book of life determines the judgment at the great white throne.<sup>60</sup> All the dead standing before the throne have come from all ages and from all over the world. They will all be

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<sup>58</sup>The Greek text for the phrase "books were opened" ("βιβλία ἠνοίχθησαν") used the same word for books as we observed in every other New Testament passage concerning books. Therefore, we know that different books play a role in judgment, and particularly at least one book must have a record of evil deeds.

<sup>59</sup>See Romans 3:9-18; see also Isaiah 53:6; Psalm 10:7; Psalm 36:1-4.

<sup>60</sup>The Greek text here for "book of life" ("τῆ βίβλω τῆς ζωῆς"--dative case) is very similar to the term for Book of Life studied above.

## The Books of Life

judged based upon the names in certain books opened before Jesus sitting on His great white throne.<sup>61</sup>

**“And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

Revelation 20:15

At the great white throne judgment, profound consequences await everyone facing final judgment from God. The lake of fire will receive eternal inhabitants, judged by God to deserve that eternal judgment. This majestic scene of judgment portrays at once both the glory of God displayed in righteous judgment, and also great sorrow in that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. God far prefers that the wicked turn away from their wickedness and embrace the Son of God by faith for eternal life.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>God ordained Isaiah to write a book that would later be used as a witness against transgressors (Isaiah 30:8). God also instructed Isaiah to seek from the Book of the Lord and read it that none of the wild animals will be missing as they inhabit the lands judged by God (Isaiah 34:16).

<sup>62</sup>See Ezekiel 33:11 for a great example of how God urges the wicked to avoid death. The entire passage from Ezekiel 33:1-20 reveals loving heart from sinners, and longs for their repentance and salvation.

## The Books of Life

Notice here that if anyone was not found written in the Book of Life,<sup>63</sup> he was thrown into the lake of fire. The Holy Spirit in the Bible teaches that unbelievers go to a temporary place of torture at the moment of death.<sup>64</sup> At the great white throne, Jesus judges unbelievers based upon the names written in the Book of Life. Because they are guilty of unbelief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Person of Jesus Christ, their names were never written in the Book of Life. Therefore, Jesus condemns them to eternal death, and they are cast into the lake of fire for eternity. Based upon the entire context, this Book of Life in Revelation 20:12, 15 contains only the names of people who are going to heaven, because they have eternal life.

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<sup>63</sup>The Greek term phrase for "was not found written in the book of life" ("οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος") indicates that the name was not in the book of life. Taking the phrase in two parts, the "not found" ("οὐχ εὐρέθη"--aorist indicative) shows the person was completely missing from the book. The Greek term for written ("γεγραμμένος"--perfect passive participle) indicates, in conjunction with the verbal phrase "was not written," that the name of the person was never written in the book, and the name of the person has not appeared in the book of life since then, and remains absent from the book of life at the time of judgment at the great white throne judgment.

<sup>64</sup>Jesus taught that "the hell" ("τὴν γέενναν") was a place of fire (Matthew 5:22), which is unquenchable (Mark 9:43), and the place where God is able to destroy ("ἀπολέσαι") both the body and soul ("ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα") (Matthew 10:28); God throws unbelievers into hell after He has killed them, and so people should fear God, and not satan or any man (Luke 12:5). Jesus also denounced the Pharisees and scribes because they made their proselytes "twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" ("υἱὸν γεέννης διπλότερον ὑμῶν"). James tells us that hell ("τῆς γεέννης") sets the tongue on fire which, in turn, sets on fire the course of our lives (James 3:6). In passing, we should also note that God did not spare evil spirits who sinned, but cast them into hell ("ταρταρώσας" kept for judgment; "tartarosas" there means the place of pits of darkness ("σειραῖς ζόφου") where the evil spirits are kept ("τηρουμένους"), awaiting judgment; this passage provides the only time the word "tartarosas" appears in any form in the New Testament.

## The Books of Life

We know the Book of Life (also called the Book of Life of the Lamb) only contains the names of believers, and it was written before the foundation of the world. No believer's name will ever be erased from that book.<sup>65</sup> As Jesus told His disciples, they should not rejoice that even the spirits are subject to them, but they should rejoice<sup>66</sup> because their names are recorded in heaven.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, in that passage, Jesus encourages His disciples to rejoice in their everlasting life built upon faith alone, so that their names

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<sup>65</sup>See the discussion of Revelation 13:8 above.

<sup>66</sup>The Greek term for "rejoice" ("χαίρετε"--imperfect tense indicates a continuous action) has an interesting usage as a command in the New Testament. In Matthew 5:12, believers should rejoice because their reward in heaven is great, because they endured persecution upon earth. In 2 Corinthians 13:11, Paul commanded the believers to rejoice as part of his final greeting to that church. In Philippians 2:18, Paul commanded the Philippians to rejoice with Paul because the Gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached, whether in pretense or in truth. In Philippians 3:1, Paul commanded the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord as Paul turns to warnings about the life, in light of the goal of life, which is to know Christ and power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. In Philippians 4:4, Paul commanded the Philippians to rejoice always, because the Lord is near. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16, Paul commanded the Thessalonians to rejoice always. In 1 Peter 4:13, Peter commanded the believers living as aliens scattered abroad to keep on rejoicing as they share in the sufferings of Christ, so that they may rejoice in great exultation at His appearing. We understand that in all these passages, God commands rejoicing as a continuous activity (imperfect tense). This command of continuous rejoicing God directed only to believers, because only believers have the Holy Spirit living within them, who can produce joy even in difficult circumstance. Only in Matthew 28:9, Jesus "greeted" His disciples after His resurrection with the term for "rejoice" ("Χαίρετε"). As we have seen, everywhere else in the New Testament that particular term means "rejoice."

<sup>67</sup>The Greek phrase "your names are recorded in heaven" ("ἐγγέγραπται" perfect passive indicative) means here that their names were written in the past and their names continue into the present to be recorded.

## The Books of Life

are recorded forever in heaven. Jesus taught His disciples that it was far greater to have your name written in heaven, than having demons subject to you on earth. The phrase "recorded in heaven" means here that their names were written in the Book of Life, because of the contrast between spiritual power on earth and eternal spiritual life in heaven. Jesus meant that their names were written in the Book of Life, because it contains the names of every born-again believer. If Jesus was only talking about an earthly book of the living, the blessing would not fit this context of rejoicing over temporal earthly powers granted to the disciples. According to Jesus, and the words of His apostles, we should rejoice every day, especially knowing that our names are recorded forever in the Book of Life. This promise of living with Jesus forever appears also in Revelation 21:27.

**“and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are in the Lamb's book of life.**

Revelation 21:27

In Revelation 21:27, the tribulation has ended, heaven and earth have passed away, and a new heaven and new earth have been created. Within that wonderful closing of the New Testament, Jesus contrasted life with Him in the New Jerusalem, and life outside of Christ. Only those people whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life shall ever come into the new Jerusalem.

The difference between life with Jesus Christ and the death of the wicked remains in brilliant contrast. Inside the new Jerusalem, God has gathered all the believers to live with Him. Jesus identified those believers

## The Books of Life

as everyone whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.<sup>68</sup> The Book of Life of the Lamb contains the names of every person who has eternal life, from all ages. After heaven and earth have been destroyed, the believers remain with Jesus Christ, while the unbelievers have been resurrected to judgment and eternal punishment, outside the new Jerusalem. Jesus made the new Jerusalem very exclusive, because only believers enter into it.<sup>69</sup> Because a believer's name can never be removed from the Book of Life, we remain eternally secure in the love of Jesus Christ.<sup>70</sup> As the Bible ends, Jesus promised to return quickly. What a wonderful Savior. He commanded us to rejoice that our names, as born-again believers, have been forever written in the Book of Life. Amen.

### Book of Life of the Lamb--Summary

1. Content. The Book of Life of the Lamb records the names of born-again believers, who will never worship the beast and his image.
2. Date. The Book of Life of the Lamb was written before the foundation of the world.

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<sup>68</sup>The Greek phrase here for "written in the Lamb's book of life" ("οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου") follows the same format we have seen previously in the New Testament. Only the names of born-again believers are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

<sup>69</sup>The Greek phrase "but only" ("εἰ μὴ") occurs frequently in the New Testament to mean exclusion. See, for example, Matthew 12:39, "only the sign of Jonah the prophet," and no other sign; Revelation 13:17, only the one with the mark of the beast may buy or sell during the Tribulation; Revelation 14:3, only the 144,000 could learn the new song; Revelation 19:12, only Jesus knows the name written on Him as He rides the white horse at the end of tribulation.

<sup>70</sup>In Revelation 22:19, we read about a person having his part taken from the tree of life. The King James Version used incorrect Latin (not Greek) manuscripts here and has "book of life" instead of the correct manuscripts reading "tree of life." See the article by Jan Krans, Erasmus and the Text of Revelation 22:19: a Critique of Thomas Holland's Crowned with Glory at <http://bibletranslation.ws/down/krans-refutation-of-holland.pdf>.



## **The Books of Life**

3. Promise. God promised that born-again believers will never worship the beast. God also promised that having your name recorded in the Book of Life of Lamb means you will be with Jesus forever and live in the new Jerusalem.

# 11

## Conclusion

God wrote several different books concerning the life and times of mankind. Some were written before the first man lived, and others were written during the lifetime of men. We know that God will blot out the names of people for their sin, indicating their physical death. Other books contain matters of eternal life, and record the deeds leading to condemnation at the great white throne. With all these books, we know that God knows all things and remembers all things, but even so, He revealed to us that He writes books about mankind, for several different reasons. The ultimate sovereignty and glory of God shine through all the books.

# Appendix A

## The Books Related to Life in the Bible

<u>Name</u>	<u>Verses</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Date Written</u>	<u>Comments</u>
<u>Book of the Living</u>	Psalms 69:28; Exodus 32:32	Names of People Physically Alive on Earth at Any Given Time;	Names Written at Life and Blotted Out upon Death	
<u>Book of Wanderings</u>	Psalms 56:8	The Wanderings of Man during His Lifetime	Perhaps Written before Man Was Alive	Perhaps the Same as the Book of Days
<u>Book of the Righteous</u>	Psalms 69:28	The Names of Righteous	Written during or after the Lifetime of the Believer	Perhaps the Same as the Book of Remembrance
<u>Book of Days</u>	Psalms 139:16	All the Days Ordained for Man	Written before Man Lived	Perhaps the Same as the Book of Wanderings
<u>Book of Turning Away</u>	Jeremiah 17:13	All the Names of People Turning away from God	Written at or after Date of Turning Away	
<u>Book of Rescue</u>	Daniel 12:1	The Names of the People of Israel Rescued	Written No Later than the Time of	Perhaps the Same as the Book

## The Books of Life

		from Great Distress	Distress	of the Righteous
<u>Book of Remembrance</u>	Malachi 3:16-18	The Names of People Who Fear God and Esteem Him	Written During the Lifetime of the People Fearing and Esteeming God	Perhaps the Same as the Book of the Righteous
<u>Book of Life</u>	Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 17:8; 20:15	The Names of Born-Again Believers	Written before the Foundation of the World	Probably the Same as the Lamb's Book of Life
<u>Lamb's Book of Life</u>	Revelation 13:8; 21:27	The Names of Born-Again Believers	Written before the Foundation of the World	Probably the Same as the Book of the Life

The Bible contains references to other books not necessarily contained in the canon of Scripture.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>The Bible mentions books not in the Bible, such as the Book of Jashar (2 Samuel 1:18). The spies wrote a book about the promised land, and divided the book into seven sections (Joshua 18:9); in the future, probably in the millennium, the deaf will hear words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see (Isaiah 29:18); these books do not appear to relate directly to eternal life.