

BOOK OF LIFE PART # 6

THE LAMB'S BOOK

The death of John Wesley, the father of Methodism, occurred in his room on City Road, London. The end was very beautiful. No pain, only a growing sense of weakness, and a tranquil acceptance of the inevitable. He slept much and spoke little, but sometimes the dying flame flickered up, and the inner light that had changed the face of England glowed with its old intensity. One afternoon before he died, he surprised his friends by bursting into song:

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath;
And when my voice is lost in death
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.

He sang two verses and then sank back exhausted. Later in the day, when weakness overcame him, by a supreme effort he marshaled his ebbing strength and gave the message that was to become the watchword of Methodism, "The best of all is, God is with us."

No doubt, no fear, no anxious care,
But comforted by staff and rod,
In the faith-brightened hour of death,
How beautiful to be with God!

I will not fear to launch my bark
Upon the darkly rolling flood,
'Tis but to pierce the mist-and then
How beautiful to be with God!

Sweet by and by
(or There's a Land that Is Fairer)
By Sanford F. Bennett

There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar;
For the Father waits over the way,
To prepare us a dwelling place there.
In the sweet by and by,
We shall meet on that beautiful shore;

When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder
(or When the Trumpet of the Lord Shall Sound and
Time Shall Be No More)

By James M. Black

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more,
And the morning breaks eternal, bright and fair;
When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore,
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise,
And the glory of His resurrection share;
When His chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies,
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

***My Savior First of All
(or When My Life Work Is Ended)
By Fanny J. Crosby***

Oh, the soul-thrilling rapture when I view His blessed face,
and the luster of His kindly beaming eye!
How my full heart will praise Him for the mercy, love, and grace

That prepared for me a mansion in the sky!

Through the gates to the city in a robe of spotless white,
He will lead me where no tears will ever fall.
In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight,
But I long to meet my Savior first of all.

Please turn with me to Revelation 21:27-22:5 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. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.⁴ They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.⁵ There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

The Bible ends with the 1st appearance of the Lamb's Book of Life. In the sweetest scene of God's Word we see the family of God home at last. The Lamb's Book of Life lists the Inhabitants of Heaven!

So, the Book of Life is an often discussed but little understood part of God's plan. The Scriptures refer to it often:

1. GOD REVEALED THE BOOK OF LIFE TO MOSES Exodus 32:32 "Yet now, if You will forgive their sin -- but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written." (NKJV). One of the clearest expressions of the love of Moses for his people was his sincere willingness to offer up his own life rather than see them disinherited and destroyed. The book to which Moses referred, the psalmist entitled "the book of the living" (Ps. 69:28). Untimely or premature death would constitute being blotted out of the book. Moses pleaded with God. He asked to forgive His people. If He couldn't Moses said he would prefer to have his name removed from the book God had written (Ex. 32:32). So we can conclude that Moses' statement indicated he was willing to die a premature death¹ (but not suffer eternal torment in hell). He did not want to be associated with a sinful, unforgiven people.
2. GOD REVEALS THAT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE BOOK OF LIFE LISTS THOSE WHO LIVE UNDER HIS BLESSING Psalm 69:28 Let them be

¹ God did not accept Moses' offer. God rather chose to punish the sinners (by premature death). AS the passage records some were destroyed by a plague (Ex. 32:35) and in the end all fighting men (except Joshua and Caleb) would in due time perish in the desert wanderings (Deut. 1:35-36; 2:14). Finally God said Moses would lead the nation (the younger generation) to the land promised them (Ex. 32:34).

This passage teaches that God forgave their sins by grace, but in His righteousness, He had to discipline the people. This is a strong reminder to us of the many tears we have because we face the painful consequences of forgiven sins! "When a person dies, his or her name is removed from the book of life (Ps. 69:28; Ezek. 13:9). The book of life (or "the living") should not be confused with the Lamb's Book of Life, which records the names of the saved (Rev. 21:27; Luke 10:20)"

blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous. (NKJV). In the Old Testament, those who were alive and under the care of God were receiving His care were said to be in His Book of Life. Thus to be “blotted out of the book of life” was to die and be outside any possible blessing. The lesson is that the lost and unrepentant wicked can have no share in God’s eternal blessings.

3. GOD USES THE BOOK OF LIFE TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PLAN FOR THE FUTURE Daniel 12:1-3 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands [watch] [Jude; Rev 12] over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, [Matt 24; Mk 13; Rev 6] Such as never was since there was a nation, [Even] to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered , [Zech. 12-14; Rom. 9-11] Every one who is found written in the book.
4. CHRIST TAUGHT THE BOOK OF LIFE WAS AN ASSURANCE OF HEAVEN Luke 10:20 "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." (NKJV)
5. PAUL SAID THE NEW TESTAMENT SAINTS COULD BE ASSURED OF THEIR PLACE IN THE BOOK OF LIFE 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. (NKJV)
6. CHRIST WARNS AND PROMISES IN RELATION TO THIS BOOK 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. (NKJV)

SO WHAT IS THE BOOK OF LIFE?

Some view the book of life as the record of all the living and that when the unsaved die their names are deleted from it. A better view is that the book is the record of those who are saved whose names were “written in the book of life from the creation of the world” (Revelation 17:8). Thus the Book of Life is the roll of the elect, written in eternity past by God from the foundation of the world, which is a frequent phrase (Matt. 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; John 17:24; Eph. 1:4; Heb. 4:3; 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20) referring to God’s pre-creation plan.

Regardless of which view is taken, at this time only the saved are in the book of life. The inhabitants will be only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. It is interesting that in the six references to the book of life in Revelation only the last one calls it “the Lamb’s” (cf. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15).²

²Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

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- ✓ **The book of life is a promise of eternal PERMANENCE** BECAUSE WE ARE SECURE: John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if [it were] not [so,] I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, [there] you may be also. (NKJV)
 - ✓ **The book of life is a promise of eternal INTIMACY: WE ARE GIVEN A NAME, BECAUSE WE ARE A LOVE GIFT FROM THE FATHER TO THE SON!** John 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. (KJV)
 - ✓ **The book of life is a promise of eternal ADOPTION:** Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together. (KJV)
 - ✓ **The book of life is a promise of eternal WELCOME:** 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.

What an unbelievable promise! Jesus with His nail scarred hands outstretched, welcomes us through the door of death, walks with us through the dark valley and welcomes us to Glory. But not as the fluttering host that slips away, no, He walks by us down the golden streets.

He leads us up the broad main street of River of the water of life all around us the saints of all the ages look on in wonder as again Jesus leads one of His precious blood bought brothers and sisters, up to meet their Father in Heaven.

And then, on the Throne in blazing light, with a river of fire flowing out before Him, and billions of angels standing around Him the Ancient of Days looks upon His Beloved Son walking toward Him. And there holding the hand of Jesus we hear Him call us by our new name, the one He gave us, our name. And standing there before the throne, God will hear Jesus present us by name as His beloved and precious one.

- ✓ **The book of life is a promise of eternal GLORIFICATION:** Then what indescribable joy to hear our Father say, "Bring the best robe and put it on him." Think of it, a robe of white, bright as the day, pure as the light! When the Lord Jesus was transfigured on the mount, something happened not only to His countenance, something happened also to His clothes. His raiment became white as the light. What a reward for faithfulness, to have a robe like that draped around the shoulders and to be invited to walk the shining ways

of glory in light transfigured clothes. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

THE BOOK OF LIFE RECORDS THE CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

VIEW ONE: THE LOST GET ERASED

The Christian's name is written in "the Book of Life," and this is what determines his final entrance into the heavenly country (Rev. 20:15). When you confess Christ on earth, He confesses your name in heaven (Matt. 10:32–33). Your name is written down in heaven (Luke 10:20) and it stands written forever. (The Greek verb "written" in Luke 10:20 is in the perfect tense: "it is once-for-all written and stands written.")³

It would appear that God's "Book of Life" contains the names of all the living, the wicked as well as the righteous (Ps. 69:28). As unbelievers die, their names are removed from the book; thus, at the final judgment, the book contains only the names of believers (Rev. 20:12–15). It then becomes "the Lamb's Book of Life" (Rev. 21:27), because only those saved by the Lord Jesus Christ have their names in it. All the others have been blotted out, something God would never do for any true child of God (see Ex. 32:32; Rom. 9:3). It is a book of *life*, and lost sinners are *dead* (Eph. 2:1).⁴

CONCLUSION IS THE SAME: ONLY SAVED IN HEAVEN AND ONLY THOSE IN BOOK ARE IN HEAVEN

VIEW TWO: GOD WROTE THE NAMES OF THOSE HE CHOSE BEFORE CREATION

Listen to Matthew Henry who summarizes the 2nd view:

1. Christ has his book of life, a register and roll of all who shall inherit eternal life; it is the book of eternal election; it is the book of remembrance of all those who have lived to God, and have kept up the life and power of godliness in evil times.
2. Christ will not blot the names of his chosen and faithful ones out of this book of life; men may be enrolled in the registers of the church, as baptized, as making a profession, as having a name to live, and that

³Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

⁴Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

name may come to be blotted out of the roll, when it appears that it was but a name, a name to live, without spiritual life; such often lose the very name before they die, they are left of God to blot out their own names by their gross and open wickedness. But the names of those that overcome shall never be blotted out.

Christ will produce this book of life, and confess the names of the faithful who stand there, before God, and all the angels; he will do this as their Judge, when the books shall be opened; he will do this as their captain and head, leading them with him triumphantly to heaven, presenting them to the Father: *Behold me, and the children that thou hast given me*. How great will this honour and reward be!⁵

John MacArthur adds, "The Lord Jesus who died to purchase the salvation of those whom God had chosen was fulfilling an eternal plan. from the foundation of the world. According to God's eternal, electing purpose before creation, the death of Christ seals the redemption of the elect forever (cf. Acts 2:23; 4:27,28). "Because in God's plan Christ was crucified for us "before the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. 1:20), we were designated for salvation by that same plan at that same time. It was then that our inheritance in God's kingdom was determined (Matt. 25:34). We belonged to God before time began, and we will be His after time has long run its course. Our names as believers were "written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain" (Rev. 13:8; cf. 17:8)".⁶

CAN A NAME ERASED MEAN SALVATION LOST? NO

In Revelation 3:5 The Book of Life is the divine journal which records the names of all those whom God has chosen to save and who, therefore, are to possess eternal life (13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19). Under no circumstances will He erase those names as city officials often did of undesirable people on their roles.⁷

The statement that their names will not be erased from the book of life presents a problem to some. But a person who is truly born again remains regenerate, as John said elsewhere (John 5:24; 6:35-37, 39; 10:28-29). While this passage may imply that a name could be erased from the book of life, actually it only gives a positive affirmation that their names will not be erased.⁸

⁵Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

⁶MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

⁷John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997.

⁸Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.

SO WHAT DOES "BLOT OUT HIS NAME..." MEAN?

There are four views. I believe the fifth is best:

1. This is a poetic, figure of speech called litotes [li-to-tez] that means 'to affirm something by denying its opposite'. [lenski, Morris, Swete, Alford]
2. This is an allusion to a civic birth record erasing those who die. [Moffat]
3. It refers to one losing their salvation. [Lange]
4. It refers to a book containing all humanity who have possessed physical life, but are erased at death after having rejected Christ. Those who do receive Christ have their place confirmed by Him. [Walvoord]
5. It is the strongest affirmation from the very lips of Jesus that no one who comes to Him will He ever cast out. Salvation is eternally secured in Heaven by the eternal plan of God the Father, and God the Son, and through the sealing of the soul to salvation by God the Spirit. Thus this book of life is seen as a source of security for all true believers. Thus when you think of the Book of Life think of security.

BLESSED IS THE BOOK OF LIFE


The names of all souls who experience this saving process stand in "the Lamb's book of life." What is our hope as those who believe in Christ? We are those who are in the Book of Life. The glorious elements describing those in that book are:

- ✓ **THOSE WRITTEN IN GOD'S BOOK OF LIFE ARE GLORIFIED ONES** for they enter the Heavenly City 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. (NKJV)].
- ✓ **THOSE WRITTEN IN GOD'S BOOK OF LIFE ARE BLOOD BOUGHT ONES** because its the Lamb that was slain's book REVELATION 21:27 *Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

Listen to Charles Spurgeon

"Many people want to know their election before they look to Christ. But they cannot learn it thus; it is only to be discovered by 'looking unto Jesus.'

"Look to Jesus, believe on Him, and you shall make proof of your election directly, for as surely as you believe, you are elect. If you will give yourself wholly up to Christ and trust Him, then you are one of God's chosen ones. Go to Jesus just as you are. Go straight to Christ, hide in His wounds, and you shall know your election.



"Christ was at the everlasting council. He can tell you whether you were chosen or not, but you cannot find out in any other way. Go and put your trust in Him. There will be no doubt about His having chosen you, when you have chosen Him."

MAY I GIVE YOU A PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION? LISTEN TO A LETTER FROM ONE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE

As you turn to Revelation 21 let me read a letter⁹ Dr. Harry Rimmer wrote in 1953, just a week before his death. He wrote to the great radio Bible teacher, Dr. Charles Fuller who was just starting a series on heaven, just as we are doing. Listen and carefully ask yourself if your confidence is as firm as his. If not may I urge you to make preparation for heaven before its too late?

Next Sunday you are to talk about Heaven. I am interested in tht land, because I have held a clear title to a bit of property there for more than fifty-five years, I did not buy it. It was given to me "without money and without price." But the donor purchased it for me at a tremendous sacrifice. I am not holding it for speculation, since the title is not transferable. It is not a vacant lot.

For more than half a century I have been sending materials, out of which the Great Architect and Builder of the Universe has been building a home for me, a home which will never be remodeled nor repaired, because it will suit me perfectly, individually and will never grow old. Termites can never undermine its foundations, for they rest upon the Rock of Ages. Fire cannot destroy it. Floods cannot wash it away. No locks nor bolts will ever be placed on its doors, for no vicious person can ever enter that Land where my dwelling stands, now almost completed and almost ready for me to enter in and abide in peace eternally, without fear of being ejected.

There is a valley of deep shadows between the place where I live in California and that to which I shall journey in a very short time. I cannot reach my home in that city of gold without passing through this dark valley of shadows; but I am not afraid, because the best Friend I ever had went through the same valley long, long, ago and drove away all its gloom. He has stuck by me through thick and thin since we first became acquainted fifty-five years ago, and I hold His promise in printed form that He will never forsake me nor leave me alone. He will be with me as I walk through the valley of shadows, and I shall not lose my way when He is with me.

⁹ From Heaven, by J. Oswald Sanders, p. 148-49.