

BOOK OF LIFE PART # 5

WHAT BOOK ARE YOU IN?

THE THREE POUND WONDER

The most complex object scientists have ever found in the Universe is a here in this room today. That object is an electronic recorder, which is the "three pounds of the most complex and highly organized matter in universe!"¹ That recorder is of course within each of our heads this morning. Just think with your mind about your brain, it is most impressive and extremely complex.

- ✓ It contains many times more nerve lines than all the telephone lines of the world put together.
- ✓ It receives the electrical signals from 200,000 living thermometer cells,
- ✓ It receives the electrical signals from a half-million pressure-sensing cells,
- ✓ It receives the electrical signals from 3 or 4 million pain-sensing cells.
- ✓ Plus the signals from the eyes, ears, nose, and taste buds.
- ✓ An amazing example of miniaturization, the brain sorts, stores and acts upon these myriad impulses. Who but God could ever built this fantastic of a "computer"?

Now for just a moment consider that the total number of synaptic connections. These measure the amount of information that can be captured and stored. These memory bytes in our brains² rival the number of stars in the Universe. Our brains pack these little electric switches into our heads at the rate of 400 Billion per gram of brain cells.

You have this morning in your head 1,500 grams of brain cells more or less. That means you have nearly 6 Octillion (that is a six with 15 zeros after it) little memory units; which is about as many stars as we know are out there in the sky.

In a universe of 50 billion galaxies, each comprising a half-trillion stars, God has placed the equivalent number of little spaces to record every word, every thought and every deed we who bear His image as humans, will every live out in our life time. And they are indelibly written across the blurry fabric that blends our physical lives to our spiritual lives, and yes, they will last forever and ever and ever!

¹ Henry M. Morris, John D. Morris, The Modern Creation Trilogy (Scripture & Creation-Volume One), Master Books, p. 189.

² Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey Pain - The Gift Nobody Wants, Harper Collins, 1993 p. 48.



WHAT FOR?

Now what would God be keeping all this information for, does He have something planned? Listen to an interesting moment the Apostle John reveals. In his vision of the great white throne judgment John saw “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. ... And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:12, 15).

God has set up a time for each individual who has ever lived to have their books contents opened. It may well be that God just plays out all they have ever experienced in a surround sound holographic recreation. A kind of Candid Camera, This was your life with the recorder being this 3 pound wonder atop our bodies that never missed a beat of our life.

When the record books are scanned, no good deeds will be found in the entire life of unbelievers; and when the book of life is scanned, their names will not be found. The books that report deeds and the book that reports faith will alike testify against them.

NOTHING WILL BE LOST

Scientists theorize that sound waves are never completely lost but gradually fade beyond detection. With sufficiently sensitive instruments, every word ever spoken in the history of mankind presumably could be retrieved. How much more certain can we be that in God’s infallible records every word and deed of mankind is perfectly preserved for use as evidence in the coming judgment!³

In the context, this can be none other than God the Father. He is presented to us as the One who transcends all time. He lives in the present, in the past, and in the prospective tenses of time. He cuts across all the ages of time. Hold on this is deep:

To Him the past is very much alive.

As Dr. Irwin A Moon of Moody Institute of Science says,

³MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

All of us have looked up, on a clear night, and seen the sparkling, twinkling stars. But, how many of us have realized that we cannot see the stars as they now are?

Every time we look, we are looking into the past, seeing them as they were. The nearest naked-eye star, Alpha Centauri, is about four light years away. The most distant naked-eye object, the Andromeda Galaxy, is about a million-and-a-half light years away. This means that the light has been traveling four light years or over a million years to reach us. As a result, we are looking into the past.

But this works both ways. If you were on one of the stars you would - assuming an adequate telescope - see the earth as it was sometime in the past. From the star Sirius, you could see what you are doing nine years ago, because, in a profoundly true scientific sense, you are still doing it. Yes, everything you have ever done, you are still doing.

The ghost of your past haunts the universe. But remember . . . God is omnipresent. This means that, for God,

- ✓ *every sin you have ever committed,*
- ✓ *every evil thing you have ever done,*
- ✓ *you are still doing, and will continue to do forever, apart from God's forgiveness.*

Only the omnipotent, eternal God, who controls all the factors of time, space and matter, could ever remove sin."

GOD LISTS MANY RECORD BOOKS IN THE BIBLE

1. The Book of Wars NUM. 21:14
2. THE BOOK OF JASHER JOSH. 10:13
3. THE CHRONICLES OF DAVID 1 CHRON. 27:24
4. THE BOOK OF GAD 1 CHRON. 29:29
5. THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET IDDO 2 CHRON. 13:22
6. THE BOOK OF NATHAN 1 CHRON. 29:29
7. THE BOOK OF JEHU 2 CHRON. 20:34
8. THE RECORD BOOK OF AHASUERUS, WHICH INDIRECTLY HELPED SAVE THE JEWS IN PERSIA ESTHER 2:23; 6:1
9. THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE MAL. 3:16
10. THE BOOK OF JUDGMENT DAN. 7:10; REV. 20:12
11. THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK REV. 5:1
12. AN ANGEL'S BOOK REV. 10:2
13. THE BOOK OF LIFE DAN. 12:1; PHIL. 4:3; REV. 20:12; 22:19

THE BOOK OF LIFE IS INTRODUCED AS THE ULTIMATE RECORD

In Revelation 20:12 we see a future scene of all who have ever lived on this planet and neglected to bow to the Lord Jesus Christ, standing before God. The setting is that of a Supreme Courtroom where each stands as a guilty and condemned prisoner before the court of the Divine Judge Himself. At this final moment no living sinners are left. The Universe has been destroyed, all sinners have been killed. All believers will be in their glorified bodies.

Now watch the sequence of events, which explains our topic of study this morning. To understand the Book of Life we need to see God's Books, and what He does with them.

Please turn with me to Daniel 7 and stand with me as we enter God's Presence starting in v. 9.

Daniel 7:9-10

"I watched till thrones were put in place,
And the Ancient of Days was seated;
His garment was white as snow,
And the hair of His head was like pure wool.
His throne was a fiery flame,
Its wheels a burning fire;
A fiery stream issued
And came forth from before Him.
A thousand thousands ministered to Him;
Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
The court was seated,
And the books were opened.

Daniel 7:13-14

"I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, One like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.
14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom the one
Which shall not be destroyed.

GOD IS GOING TO GIVE EACH OF US THE RESULT OF OUR LIFE OR THE RESULT OF CHRIST'S LIFE

These books are God's record of every thought, of every word, and of every deed of every sinful human—all have been flawlessly and indelibly recorded by divine omniscience. **These records will provide the evidence for eternal condemnation or eternal blessing. Two books are contrasted. The Book of works that condemns the lost and the Book of Life that contains the names of all the redeemed.**

Daniel 12:1-2

“At that time Michael shall stand up,
The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people;
And there shall be a time of trouble,
Such as never was since there was a nation,
Even to that time.
And at that time your people shall be delivered,
Every one who is found written in the book.
And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,
Some to everlasting life,
Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

THE LOST WILL BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS

GOD HAS CAPTURED AND RECORDED EVERY WORD.

Matthew 12:37

“For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

GOD HAS CAPTURED AND RECORDED EVERY ACTION

Matthew 16:27

“For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

GOD HAS CAPTURED AND RECORDED EVERY THOUGHT.

Luke 8:17

“For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light.

THE SCRIPTURES ALSO CONSISTENTLY PORTRAY THAT THERE ARE DEGREES OF PUNISHMENT IN HELL.

Matthew 10:14-15

“And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.¹⁵ “Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

Matthew 11:22

“But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.;

Mark 12:38-40

Then He said to them in His teaching, “Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces,³⁹ “the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts,⁴⁰ “who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”

Luke 12:47-48

“And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.⁴⁸ “But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

Hebrews 10:29

Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

Sin is fit only for the fire (vv. 52, 55, 57). A defiled garment was to be burned in the fire; it was not to be purified but destroyed. When Jesus spoke about hell, He used the word *gehenna*, which referred to the garbage dump outside Jerusalem “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:44; see Isa. 66:24). Hell is God’s eternal garbage dump prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41) *and for those who follow the devil by rejecting Jesus Christ.* It’s a lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 21:10, 14–15) where Satan and his associates will suffer

forever along with people whose names were not found in the Book of Life because they hadn't trusted Jesus Christ and been born again into God's family.

The consequences of leprosy were temporal, but the consequences of sin are eternal. The Jews knew no cure for leprosy, but there is a remedy for sin—faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Have you trusted Him? If you have, are you telling others the good news that they don't have to be lepers and live forever in the fiery garbage dump of hell?⁴

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE BOOK OF LIFE SPEAKS OF ETERNAL SECURITY

John 17:6-10

"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.⁷ "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You.⁸ "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.⁹ "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.¹⁰ "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

They were Yours sums up all of Jesus' ministry, including the cross that was just hours away. Jesus emphasized that those who believed in Him were given by the Father. "They were Yours" (cf. v. 9) is a potent assertion that before conversion, they belonged to God (cf. 6:37). That is true because of God's election. They were chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4), when their names were written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 17:8). Cf. Acts 18:10, where God says He has many people in Corinth who belong to Him but are not yet saved. ⁵

When Jesus spoke of the Book of Life in His earthly ministry He emphasized the joy of having one's name written there.

Then at the end of His Book He describes the joys of being in the book of life. One of the chiefest being an indestructible life. The power of an endless life let's us face even certain death with peacefulness and joy.

PAUL SPEAKS OF THE CERTAINTY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

⁴Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Holy*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1994.

⁵John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997.

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.

Perhaps the depth of impact the early church produced is tied to their conscious assurance of their salvation. They were confident that in eternity past, God registered all the names of His elect in that book which identifies those inheritors of eternal life (*Rev. 3:5; cf. Dan. 12:1; Mal. 3:16, 17; Luke 10:20; Rev. 17:8; 20:12*).⁶

Listen to what a 17th Century Puritan said, it is a good word for us today to dwell upon as we think of God's plan.

Sanctification is the only sure mark of God's election. The names and number of the elect are a secret thing, no doubt, which God has wisely kept in His own power and not revealed to man. It is not given to us in this world to study the pages of the book of life and see if our names are there. But if there is one thing clearly and plainly laid down about election, it is this—that elect men and women may be known and distinguished by holy lives. It is expressly written that they are “elect through sanctification,” “chosen to salvation through sanctification,” “predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son,” and “chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be holy.” Hence, when St. Paul saw the working “faith” and laboring “love” and patient “hope” of the Thessalonian believers, he said, “I know your election of God” (1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4; 1 Thess. 1:3, 4). He that boasts of being one of God's elect, while he is willfully and habitually living in sin, is only deceiving himself and talking wicked blasphemy. Of course, it is hard to know what people really are; and many who make a fair show outwardly in religion may turn out at last to be rotten-hearted hypocrites. But where there is not, at least, some appearance of sanctification, we may be quite certain there is no election. The church catechism correctly and wisely teaches that the Holy Spirit “sanctifieth all the elect people of God.”⁷

A righteous identity must issue in righteous behavior. Such behavior is the outward manifestation of the inward transformation, and it is the only sure proof that such transformation has taken place. No one becomes a Christian solely by their own choice. Rather, believers are those who have been chosen of God. The truth of divine election is clearly taught in Scripture. Ephesians 1:4 says that God “chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world.” Paul was confident of God's choice of the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:4) and thanked Him

⁶John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997.

⁷*Holiness*, (Simpsonville, SC: Christian Classics Foundation) 1997.

for it: “We should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13). God did not call us because of our good works, “but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity” (2 Tim. 1:9).

Believers’ names have been written in the book of life from before the foundation of the world (cf. Rev. 13:8; 17:8). Underlying our response to God’s free, sovereign grace is His plan and initiative.⁸

OH THE JOY OF BEING INTRODUCED TO CHRIST

Some years ago while living in Britain, I had the honor of being introduced to the Lord Mayors of London, York, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Belfast. These men treated me with the greatest consideration and respect possible though I doubt if any of them remembers anything about me or the occasion of my visit.

However, it was altogether different when I was introduced to the Lord Jesus. At that moment He wrote my name in His Book of Life, engraved it on the palms of His hands, and put it on His breastplate and the shoulder pieces of His great high priestly garments. Indeed, it was then He gave me His pardon from all my sins, gifted me with eternal life, and provided me with the hope of glory.

An introduction to Christ was but the beginning of an unending revelation of Himself to my waiting, wondering, and worshipping heart. The more one gets to know Him, the more He is loved and the better He is served. I think this is what Peter had in mind when he wrote, “Whom having not seen, yet love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

—Gavin Hamilton⁹

⁸MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

⁹Tan, Paul Lee, *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations*, (Garland, Texas: Bible Communications, Inc.) 1996.