

Can Believers Be Blotted Out of the Book of Life?

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How It All Ends

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Bible Text: Exodus 32:32; Revelation 3:5

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Are you kidding me? After all we've done, God wants to give us a blessing?

Exodus 32:29 For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin – and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

So more people died. By the way, when they were struck with the plague, don't you know that they remembered three months ago Egypt was the recipient of God's wrath and now they are.

But I said all that and read all that and gave you all that background to ask you this question: can believers be blotted out of the book of life? Now, some of you are already shaking your head and you have got to read this verse again. Look at verse 32-33, Moses said, "if you will not forgive this people, if you will not forgive their sins, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."

What is the purpose of a book of life? Well, a cultural note there, just making sure you're awake. A cultural note: it was customary to have registers of citizenship in which were entered the names of citizens both natural and adopted. Heaven is represented as a city and its inhabitants are registered. Some whom have not yet reached the heavenly city are regarded as citizens on their way home and in the case of Israel, they were citizens of a

covenant community. That is from James Freeman's "Manners and Customs of the Bible," I think a book everyone should own. It won't make you a good Bible student but it will give you a tool, at least, if you have the discipline to study.

Question: what was the purpose of the book of the living? The purpose of the book of the living was to record people who were a part of a community. Here's how it went basically: when you were born, you were written in the registry of the city in which you were born. If you died, your name was blotted out. That's not all there is to say because we have some Scriptures to consider, but please notice that David, when talking about fellow Israelites, he says, "My enemies add iniquity to their iniquity. Let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living and not be written with the righteous."

Apparently, the writers of the Old Testament, Moses and David, believe that everyone who was living at a particular time and a part of the covenant community of Israel was written in a book of the living. So, the question is: was Moses asking to be removed from a book of citizens in heaven or was he asking to be removed from a book of the living people in the community of Israel? Because if culture of the time matters; if the history behind a passage matters, you find out that the book of the living was a cultural norm that when you were a part of a community, your name was written in the book of the living and when you died then your name was blotted out.

Why would they do that? Well, because they liked to tax people. That's why it was normal in the culture. What better way to tax people than to have a list of residents. That's part of the reason why baby baptism was so popular in the Middle Ages in Europe, because there is no better way to tax people than to use baptismal records. You know if you're in the middle of a state church situation, and if you put eternal significance upon infant baptism, parents are going to baptize their infants.

If you can continue to preach and the state sponsored teaching is baptize Junior or he goes to hell before the age of accountability, you have to baptize him. All of a sudden, the entire populace wants to baptize Junior and you know probably every person who is in the land is baptized and recorded in those registries so you just go to the churches and do your taxing. It makes all the sense in the world.

Daniel 11: Here is a promise at the end of time, Michael the archangel is going to stand up for his people, the Jews, everyone that is found written in the book. So, every Jew that is making covenant now with their new Messiah later on the tribulation period will be in this book.

Is it a literal book? A figurative book? I'm not ready to debate or fight with you about that but just understand that the writers of the Old Testament believe that every living member of the Jewish community believed, that you were written in a book of the living. Why? Because you were a part of the Jewish community that was still alive on planet earth.

Was Moses asking to be blotted out of the Lamb's book of life? The Lamb's book of life isn't even mentioned until Revelation 13. He was not asking to be removed from heaven's registry; he was not asking to be removed from the Lamb's book of life; he was not asking to lose his salvation at all. He was asking to die. If you're going to kill all these people, you might as well kill me. And God says, "I'll kill those who sin against me." Then he plague them. Contextually, it makes good sense.

Let's go to the New Testament (Luke 10)

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not. Don't rejoice because the devils are subject to your name but rejoice in this, because your names are written in heaven.

My question is: is this the same book? Are we talking about the same book? Because he's talking in the New Testament, I know it's before the cross, but he's talking to the foundation of the New Testament church (Ephesians 2), the apostles, and he says, "Don't rejoice because you have power over demons, rejoice because your name is written in heaven." So, I wonder, are we talking about the same idea here? Are we just talking about a book made up of people who are just living and are a part of the covenant community of Israel? I don't think so.

Look with me please, if you would, to Philippians 3:14. Have you heard this verse before? Paul says, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Has everyone heard that before? Look at verse 20, "For our conversation is in heaven." Do you see that? Our citizenship is in heaven. Who is the "our?" Believers in Philippi are the subject of the this answer. Look at chapter 4:3, "And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers," look at this, "whose names are in the book of life." If you went from 3:20 to 4:3, you would probably think it was the same thought, wouldn't you? We have citizenship in 3:20 in heaven and we have a book of life in 4:3.

What would you think about that book of life? It was a collection of citizens from where? Heaven. Are you all with me? Context matters, folks. We're not talking about the same book that was spoken of in Exodus 32, Psalm 69 and Daniel 12. Different book. Why? How do I know? Context.

Hebrews 12:20 For they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.

And now he's about to compare Moses and the Israelites to Jesus and the church. I think you're going to see he compares that book with another book.

Verse 22, But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly, and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Here we have Moses, we have Mount Sinai, we have the blood of goats and calves, we have a book of life and it really just represents the book of the living community. Over here, we don't have that: we have Mount Zion, we have not Moses but Jesus, we have not the blood of bulls and goats but the blood of Jesus, we don't have just the congregation of people living on earth known as covenant Israel but we have the church of the firstborn, we don't have a book of life that can be blotted out on planet earth but we have a church of the firstborn which is written in heaven—citizens, part of the general assembly and church of the firstborn written in heaven.

Revelation 3 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of **the book of life**.

“Well, if you have to overcome to stay in the book, what do you have to do to overcome?”

1 John 5:4, He who is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Hebrews is the perfect version of what was pictured in Exodus, right? Same thing in Revelation. You have an exodus in the book of Exodus and you have an exodus in the book of Revelation. They came out of great tribulation. How did they come? The blood of a Lamb. How did the Israelites in Exodus get out? They put blood on the doorpost. How did they overcome? By the blood of the Lamb.

Here you have a book of life you can be blotted out of. If all of these are perfect examples of all of these, then why would this be any different? It must be that this is a book of citizens of a different community than this book was. You have everything else that goes with it. It makes sense, then, to me that you have a book of the living on earth and a book of the living that belong in heaven.

Revelation 13 who is like to the beast and who is able to make war with him and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in **the book of life of the Lamb** slain from the foundation of the world.

Remember, the original question is “Can I be blotted out of the book of life?” The answer is no. What is the distinguishing characteristic of those who do not bow to the antichrist in this verse? They are in the book of life. What would you have to do to get blotted out

of the book of life if it were possible for you to be blotted out of the Lamb's book of life? What would you have to do? You'd have to do something worse than bowing to the antichrist because if you're in the book, you're not going to bow. If you're in the book, you're not going to bow so if you can be blotted out of the Lamb's book of life, you have to do something worse than worshipping the antichrist.

By the way, this is the first mention of the "Lamb's book of life." Revelation 17:8 looks a lot like it.

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in **the book of life** from the foundation of the world.

If your name is in the book of life, will you bow to the beast? No. Okay, it must mean that you overcame by the blood of the Lamb. So, if you can be blotted out of the Lamb's book of life because you're still sure that the book in Exodus 32 and the book in Revelation 17 are the same book, just remember what you're saying. You're saying that you have to do something worse than bow to the antichrist to be removed from the book because you won't bow to the antichrist if you're in the book.

Now look at Revelation 20 for the last argument that the Lamb's Book of Life is for residents of the New Jerusalem and not the book that they could be blotted out of in Exodus 32 because they were simply residents of an earthly community of Israelites. How were you blotted out then? You died. That's it. That's why David was praying for his enemies to be removed from it, he wanted their death. Daniel 12, Michael the archangel stands up for those who are written in the book of life. Why are they in the book of life? Because they are living Jews, not because they're dead and not because they're citizens of heaven.

Revelation 20:11, And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is **the book of life**: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

How did you get to go to the lake of fire? Your name is not in the book. What were we guaranteed that you would not do if your name was in the book? You would not bow down to the antichrist, the beast. So, we're told that you will go to the lake of fire and you will bow down to the beast if your name is not in the book of life. So, let's put it in some context.

Look at chapter 21:2: “And I John saw the holy city.” Look at that. If that chapter division wasn’t there, you would have the city and the registry (Book of Life) within two verses of each other. Do you all see that? Context is awesome. And you see him wiping all tears from our eyes in verse 4 and then look at verse 25, if you would, “And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.” What are we talking about? Verse 23, the city. They will bring their glory and honor into the city, “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

Mark it down: if you are born again, 1 John 5:4, you are born of God. You have put your faith in Christ. Revelation 12:10-11: you’ve overcome by the blood of the Lamb and your name is in the book of life because you belong in the holy city. Question: if you had to be born to be in this book of life of Exodus 32 and you’re blotted out, when are you put in this Lamb’s book of life? What kind of life do you have once you get saved? Eternal life. So, if you have eternal life and this is a Lamb’s book of the living and you have eternal life, when can you expect to be blotted out? Never! Because you’re in that Lamb’s book of the living so long as you live. Whose life do you have in you? Christ’s life. So, as long as Christ lives, you live. As long as you live, you’re in the Lamb’s book of life.