

Appendix 1

The Book of Life / Books of Judgment

The Book of Life

The book of life appears in revelation more than any other place in the Bible. Observations will, therefore, begin there.

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.

There are three main interpretations of this passage:

- 1) There are those who believe that is possible to be saved but later lose one's salvation if that person does not persevere in good works or loyalty to Christ. The words of Christ in Matthew 10:32 seem to fit the latter half of Revelation 3:5 and support this view.
- 2) All humanity is initially written in the book of life but only the saved will not be erased.
- 3) This is a promise that the believer's name will not be blotted out, not a threat that it might. i.e. it is a figure of speech called "litotes," in which an affirmative statement is expressed by the negative of a contrary statement. In other words, by saying that their names will not be blotted out, the writer is assuring the readers that their names are secure in the book of life.

The first view has its weakness in that all human faith comes from God and is sustained by Him. We are not saved apart from God's divine choice nor do we maintain our salvation without it. It is difficult to understand how we could lose a salvation that we did nothing to attain. Add to this the fact that the wicked are also written in the book of life (Psalm 69:28) and the basis for an assumption that this refers to a loss of one's salvation is eliminated (Thomas, 1:261).

The third view would make "the promise to the overcomer an empty one unless the possibility exists that such a blotting out could occur. What incentive is furnished by being promised deliverance from something that can not happen? Furthermore, the psalmist prays for the blotting out of the names from the book of life (Psa. 69:28) and in doing so indicates that such is a distinct possibility." (Thomas, 1:261-262).

Since Exodus 32:32 and Psalm 69:28 indicate that removal from the book of life is possible, it is better to conclude that the book initially contained the names of both the saved and unsaved and that only the names of the saved will remain in it (view 2).

This fits the teaching in scripture which indicates that Christ died for all men (Jn. 1:29; 3:16; 4:42; I Jn. 2:2; 4:14) but due to unbelief, not all will benefit from His death. It is because the provision of eternal life is potential for everyone, that everyone has their name written in the book of life. But as men reject Christ on an individual basis and their salvation fails to become actual, their names are erased.

In Revelation 3:5 the assembly of people being addressed was no different than any other church and consisted of both true believers and professing believers. The threat of being erased from the book of life is directed to those who potentially could be saved but had not yet secured their salvation in Christ. Others, through their faithfulness, will show that their commitment to Christ was real and they are actually saved.

Revelation 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the **book of life** of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Revelation 13:8 can be translated as it is above (NKJ) or as "and all who dwell on earth will worship him, every one whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain" (RSV). The word order of the NKJ version more closely follows the Greek word order, but when this verse is compared to Revelation 17:8, the translation of the RSV seems to be what was intended.

We see two things from this verse relative to the book of life.

1) No matter which translation was the intended meaning, it's clear that the contents of the book go back before anything was created.

2) The perfect tense "have not been written" indicates a permanent state of affairs in Greek and could either mean that the names had never been written in the book of life and will stay like that, or that the names "do not stand written" because they have been removed (Thomas, 2:164). Based on the discussion above, we would choose the second option, namely, that the names that were in the book have been permanently removed because those individuals worshipped the beast instead of the Lamb.

Revelation 17:8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the **book of life** from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

As in Revelation 13:8 it's clear that the contents of the book of life go back before anything was created. In this case, the verb "are not written" is a perfect passive in Greek having the same connotations as it does in 13:8 (see above). Those who marvel at the beast cannot be in the book of life. "This is the permanent incapacity for life in those who have chosen to lay up treasure on earth and worship the beast" (Sweet).

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

This, by implication, is the second resurrection and only includes those who will experience the second death. There is no mention of the righteous, and the book of life only enters the picture to show that their names are not written in it (Thomas, 2:431).

"No living mortals participate in the judgment, only 'the dead'" (Thomas, 2:430). The individual's deeds that are written in heavenly books

(plural) form the basis of their judgment (cf. Dan. 7:10). In addition, there is the book of life which apparently determines the fate of each individual depending on whether or not their names are recorded in it. The books of deeds and book of life do not conflict with each other since a person's works flow from who he is and what he believes.

Revelation 20:15 And anyone not found written in the **book of life** was cast into the lake of fire.

Judgment awaits those whose names are not found to be written in the book of life. Though men are judged by their works, it is evident that their destiny is primarily determined by their lack of spiritual life (Walvoord, 309).

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**.

Based on the above conclusions, we would assume that those written in the book of life are whose names remain after the unbelieving are erased. These will enter the eternal state. The Book is called the Lamb's because He has secured the salvation of every name written in it.

Revelation 22:19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the **book** of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the **book of life**, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

Again, taking one's name out of the book means it was in there to begin with. God says that judgment awaits those who distort and take away from the Word of God.

Related Passages that imply a book of life:

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

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

Deuteronomy 9:14 (25:19; 29:19) 'Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.'

The above passages suggest that names can be blotted out of the book. That the righteous and unrighteous at some time are recorded in it.

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

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**."

Hebrews 12:23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are registered in heaven*, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,

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Isaiah 65:

5 Who say, 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am holier than you!' These *are* smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.

6 "Behold, **it is written before Me**: I will not keep silence, but will repay -- even repay into their bosom --

7 Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together," Says the LORD, "Who have burned incense on the mountains and blasphemed Me on the hills; therefore I will measure their former work into their bosom."

Daniel 7:10 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.

Conclusion:

From the above passages we can conclude that the book of life was in existence before God created man and contained the names of all of humanity because the death of Christ makes salvation for every person potentially possible. However, when people reject His salvation, the potential they once had to be saved is lost. They are then erased from the book of life. At the final judgment they will be judged according to their deeds that are also recorded in books. No one will pass this judgment since their deeds will reveal their rejection of God and the way of salvation He has provided. This will be confirmed by the absence of their names in the book of life. They will then be cast into the lake of fire.

Whether actual books will be opened or this is simply a means of describing the blessing of salvation and basis of judgment is not known.