

Book of the Living

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Almighty God notes the conduct of everyone who has lived, or is still living, in the physical and spiritual realms. Those who overcome sin (1Jn. 3:4; cf. Rev. 2:26; 3:5; 3:21) and continue to live in accordance with His will, as expressed by His every word (Mat. 4:4), will be included in “the book of the living”. Those who refuse to obey His law and commandments will be blotted out of this book,

Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let them not come into Your righteousness. ²⁸ **Let them be blotted out of the book of the living**, and not be written with the righteous (Ps. 69:27-28; emphasis added; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

The book of the living is not a physical book because it appeared in a prophetic vision depicting events that will take place in the spirit realm (Rev. 20:12). Therefore, it is meant to figuratively represent God’s ability to know the intent and action of everyone in heaven and on earth (Isa. 46:10; 48:3; Mt. 10:29-30; Heb. 4:12). Not only that, but the vision given to the apostle John, and recorded in the book of Revelation, confirms that everyone will give an account of their conduct in the Day of Judgment, with the exception of those who were part of the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5),

But I (Christ) say to you that for every idle word men may speak, **they will give account of it in the day of judgment.** ³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned (Mt. 12:36-37; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

And I (John) saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books (975, Gk. *biblia*, small books; i.e. of God’s word) 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** (of God’s word) (Rev. 20:12; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The majority of Christians today believe they do not need to obey God’s law and commandments, which are written in the “books of God’s word”. According to this reasoning, they can be lawless (i.e. disregard obedience to the law) and still have their names written in the Book of Life. Is this teaching in accordance with scripture?

Not everyone who says to me (Christ), ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; **depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!**’ (Mt. 7:21-23; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore anyone, who subscribes to the belief they can be included in the Book of Life while ignoring or breaking God’s law and commandments, is deceived. In contrast, those who understand the necessity of obeying God’s word will have their names written in the Book of Life (cf. Mt. 19:17; Rev. 14:12). Among these people are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because Almighty God does not regard them as being dead

due to the fact they will be resurrected to everlasting life at Christ's return (1Cor. 15:50-56; 1Thes. 4:13-17),

But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: ³² 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'? **He is not the God of the dead but of the living** (Mt. 22:31-32; NASB; emphasis added).

Those who reject God's law and commandments are regarded as "dead" because they will not be in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6),

Then another of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' ²² But Jesus said to him 'Follow me, and **let the dead bury their own dead.**' (Mt. 8:21-22; emphasis added)

And **you, being dead in your trespasses** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He (Almighty God) has made alive (now in the Book of Life) together with him (Christ), having forgiven you all trespasses (Col. 2:13; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So, are those who have their sins forgiven able to ignore, or continue to break, the very law and commandments that necessitated the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ in the first place, and still be included in the Book of Life?

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law (re: death penalty for sin; Rom. 6:23) but under grace (unmerited pardon; following repentance for sins; cf. Ac. 2:38; 5:32b)? **Certainly not!** (Rom. 6:15; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added)

Modern Christianity wants it both ways. They want to be forgiven for the sins they committed, and then continue to break the very law and commandments that previously excluded them from the Book of Life. Thankfully, this false teaching was not part of the early church that Christ founded. Therefore, the apostle Paul could assure members of the Body of Christ that they would be included in the Book of Life,

And I (Paul) urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel (good news), with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, **whose names are in the Book of Life** (Php. 4:3; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Does this mean that a member of the early church could not slip and sin again? In reality they could, and should this occur they would ask forgiveness and their relationship with Almighty God would be restored,

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (Ps. 119:172b). ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And **if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ** the righteous (1Jn. 1:8-10; 1Jn. 2:1; Ed. note in parenthesis).

For we do not have a High Priest (Christ) who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses (that can lead to sin), but was in all points tempted (tested) as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace (forgiveness), that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (i.e. when we sin) (Heb. 4:15-16; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The apostle Paul acknowledged that it was easy to fall back and commit a sin, even after being redeemed through the sacrifice of Christ. In situations like this, Paul understood that, having been humbled after committing sin, he could ask the forgiveness of Almighty God in Christ's name and his request would be granted,

O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh (carnal nature associated with flesh and blood human beings) the law of sin (Rom. 7:24-25; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore, everyone created in God's image, whether in the spirit or physical realm, is initially written in the Book of Life. However, following their first sin they are removed until they repent and return to obeying God's law and commandments, whether it is during their lifetime or the judgement period of the second resurrection (Rev. 20:5-6). This truth is irrevocable because Moses attempted to intercede on behalf of those who sinned, but God would not accept his request,

Yet now, if You will forgive their sin – but if not, I pray, **blot me out of Your book** which You have written. ³³ And the Lord said to Moses, **'Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.'** (Ex. 32:32-33; emphasis added).

No human being can intercede to prevent another person, or persons, from giving account for the sins they have committed. This was the point that God was making with Moses, even though his intentions were honorable. Sadly, there are religious organizations that teach contrary to God's truth, and claim that sinners can be forgiven after their death through others who are willing to be baptized on their behalf (see: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptism_for_the_dead). One major religious system even accepts indulgences so that sinners can circumvent the consequences for sins they have committed (see: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/indulgence).

According to a number of scriptures on this subject, there are not many names written in the Book of Life prior to the time of the second resurrection. In the parable of the wedding festival in Matthew 22, many refused to attend. This is remarkable because the story is a metaphor describing the future marriage between Christ and his church. As the conclusion of this parable coincides with the time of Christ's return, it is clear that very few will be in the first resurrection compared to the billions who have lived throughout man's history,

For many are called, but few are chosen (Mt. 22:14; cf. Mt. 20:16).

Therefore, it is incumbent upon those who believe in obeying the law and commandments of Almighty God to pray that more individuals will be led to repentance,

Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out more laborers into his harvest (Mt. 9:37; cf. Lk. 10:2).

...the goodness of God leads you to repentance (Rom. 2:4b).

No one can come to me (Christ) unless the Father who sent me draws him ... (Jn. 6:44a; cf. Jn. 6:65; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As God is not willing that anyone perish forever, it seems likely that every sinner will eventually be humbled and brought to a state of repentance by Him, repent of their sins and be part of Almighty God's family (2Pet. 3:9b). However, the majority will not reach this point until the second resurrection, which is pictured by the Last Great Day of God's Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 7:37; see "God's Holy Days").

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor. 11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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