

The Book of Life

By Rich Jacobs, M.D.

“He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.” Revelation 3:5, (NIV)

1. Read Christ’s admonition and instructions to the church at Sardis, in **Revelation 3:1–6**.
 - a. What was this church’s reputation? What does Jesus say about their spiritual health?
 - b. What specific spiritual issues did the Christians at Sardis have, according to the resurrected, glorified Lord? Did everyone at Sardis have those problems?
 - c. What do you think is an “overcomer”? What do they overcome?
 - d. What rewards does Christ promise to the overcomer? What do you think is the Book of Life and its relationship to “overcomers”?
2. There is only one Old Testament reference that specifically mentions the Book of Life, found in **Psalms 69:28**.

Psalms 69:28 *May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous. (NASB)*

- a. **Psalm 69** is said to be a psalm of David, but many portions of it are prophetic, foreseeing the ministry, betrayal, and crucifixion of Christ. For example, look at these comparison verses
 - **Psalm 69:4**, compared to **John 15:25**.
 - **Psalm 69:9**, compared to **John 2:17**.
 - **Psalm 69:21**, compared to **Matthew 27:34, 48; Luke 23:36; John 19:28–30**.
 - **Psalm 69:22, 23**, compared to **Romans 11:9, 10**
 - **Psalm 69:25**, compared to **Acts 1:20**.
 - b. If this is David speaking, whom do you think he is asking God to blot of the Book of Life? (*Hint*: see **Psalm 69:18**)
 - c. If this is Christ speaking through the prophet who wrote **Psalm 69**, whom do you think is being blotted out of the Book of Life? Explain.
3. Read **Exodus 32:32, 33**. Do you think this is the Book of Life? If so, who wrote the book?
4. Read **Malachi 3:16, 17**. Do you think the “Book of Remembrance” is the same as the Book of Life? Explain. If these are the same books, what are the characteristics of those written in the Book of Life?

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5. Read **Philippians 4:3**. Who does Paul say is written in the Book of Life in this passage? What do they all have in common?

6. Read **Revelation 13:8**.

Revelation 13:8 *All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.* (NIV)

- a. To whom does the Book of Life belong? When was He slain? Explain.
- b. Whose names are not written in the Book of Life? Why do you think this is so?

7. Read **Daniel 12:1–3**. Daniel, a prophet exiled by Babylon in the 7th century B.C., is being told of end times events by an angelic messenger.

- a. Who is Michael? Whom does he protect? Why do they need protection?
- b. How is it determined who will be delivered from this distress? (*Hint*: see **Daniel 12:1**).
- c. Do you think the Book of Life is referred to in these verses? Why or why not?

8. This verse completes the family tree of Jesus Christ. He is said to descend through the “son of Adam”, though His human genealogy is through Eve“. . . *the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*” **Luke 3:38**, (NAS)

- a. Why do you think Cain is not listed in Christ’s genealogy? How about Abel?
- b. Christ is the son of man (see **Matthew 8:20; 9:6; 10:23 11:19, etc.**). Conceived by the Holy Spirit, He is also the “Son of God” (**Matthew 4:3,6;8:29;26:63;27:40, etc.**). Though Jesus is God, He is part of the human “family”. If you are a saint, are you part of God’s family? Christ’s family? Explain.
- c. If we are part of Christ’s family, what is that relationship? (*Hint*: See **Matthew 28:10; John 20:17, 21:23; Hebrews 2:11, 17**).
- d. We know Jesus called God His “Father” (**Matthew 7:21, etc.**). May we call God our Father, too? (*Hint*: See **Matthew 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 15, etc.**)
- e. How do you think we became part of God in Christ’s family? (*Hint*: See **Ephesian 1:11, 12** and **Matthew 12:50**).
- f. How do you think God’s in Christ’s family tree is related to the Book of Life, if at all? Explain

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9. Read **Revelation 17:8**.

Revelation 17:8 *The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.* (NIV)

- a. Those inhabitants of the earth who were deceived by the “beast” (a symbol of the Satanically empowered Antichrist and his kingdom) do not have their names written in the Book of Life. From when were their names not written in the Book of Life?
- b. Also, read **Revelation 13:8**. What do you conclude about when people are excluded from the book of life?

10. Read **Revelation 20:10–15**. This event is prophesied to take place after the Millennial reign of Christ and His Church. The resurrection and rapture of the righteous already took place, just before the Trumpet Judgements of God’s Wrath (**Revelation 8–11**), before the Millennium.

- a. Besides the Book of Life, other books are opened at the time of this Judgment. Based on what is written in these other books, how will some people be judged? Which people do you think will be judged this way? Why?
- b. Some people have their names written in the Book of Life. Based on what you’ve already studied, whose names appear in this book? How will they be judged. Explain.
- c. What happens to the people whose names are not written in the Book of Life?
- d. What is the “second death”? (*Hint*: see **Revelation 20:14**). What is the relationship between the second death and the Book of Life?

11. Read **Revelation 21:27**. This verse talks about the New Creation and the New Jerusalem, after this universe and time itself are destroyed by God.

- a. According to this verse and its context, who is allowed to enter this new creation? Explain. (*Hint*: see **Revelation 21:7**)
- b. List the characteristics of those who will not be allowed to enter the New Jerusalem. (*Hint*: see **Revelation 21:8**)

BONUS INFORMATION:

The **Book of Jubilees** is an ancient Jewish book that is considered to be pseudepigrapha (a work of unattributed text) by protestant and Catholic Christians and by most Jews. The book is regarded to be canonical by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and by Jews in Ethiopia, where it is called the “**Book of Divisions**”. **Jubilees 30:21–23**, says Jews who live in uncleanness and “*break the covenant*” will be “*recorded in the heavenly tablets as adversaries*,”

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and they will be erased from the book of life, and they will be destroyed out of the book of life, and they will be recorded in the book of those who will be destroyed and with those who will be rooted from the earth.” **Jubilees 36:10** says these judgements are executed as an end-times event.

The **Shepherd of Hermas** is an early Christian allegory that is not canon, but was respected and quoted by the Apostolic Fathers. In this book, an “angel of repentance”, named Hermas, dressed in shepherd’s garb, giving advice to the church. Among his advice, he says, “*Fear not, therefore, to rebuke your children, for I know if they repent with all their heart, they will be written in the book of Life, together with the saints.*”

The ten “Days of Awe”, between Rosh Hashanah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) represent a time of prayer, fasting, worship, and repentance for observant Jews, who believe these days are provided to them by God to amend for known sins. The penalty for not doing so is being erased from the Book of Life.

Although these sources are not part of our Bible, they illustrate common concepts about the Book of Life that seem to be congruent with biblical concepts, were widely held in communities of Judeo-Christian faith, and endured for centuries.