

The Book of Life *By James Moriello*

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This study has been prepared to explain the biblical teaching of the “Book of Life”. To this end, we will look at twelve Scriptures that speak of it. The understanding that best harmonizes all of the biblical texts on the subject is that there are actually two books written in heaven. In addition, there are multiple books in heaven which contain the works of those who trusted in them. The “Book of Life”, or the ‘Book of all Living’ contains the names of all people ever created. The “Lamb’s Book of Life”, or the ‘Book of all Saved’, contains the names of only those redeemed sinners who have trusted Jesus Christ for eternal salvation and have an eternal home in heaven. These are literal books. One of the rules of biblical interpretation is to take Scripture in its literal sense unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. The context of the selected verse determines which book is being referenced. Most Scriptures are followed by my brief commentary.

Exodus 32:32-33: ³² 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.

Commentary: This is the first book, the Book of Life. It cannot be the Lamb’s Book of Life because nobody can be blotted out of that book, since salvation is eternally secure and cannot be lost (John 3:16, 10:28). Sin is the cause of the blotting out. Believers are free from the power of sin positionally, but sin remains as a curse upon unbelievers (Psalm 32:1-2; John 9:41). Ultimately, when all unbelievers are blotted out of the ‘Book of all Living’, the two books will match, and there will be two copies of the heavenly citizens roll.

Psalms 69:27-28: ²⁷ 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.

Psalms 139:16: ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When *as yet there were* none of them.

Commentary: This passage supports the idea of the existence of a book containing the names of all people, their days beginning at conception. Of those, many were chosen from “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4).

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.”

Commentary: This cannot be the book containing the names of all living, since not all are saved. The reference is to the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Luke 10:20: ²⁰ Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

Commentary: The unsaved dead will not be rejoicing in heaven. The reference is to the Lamb’s Book of Life. What a great encouragement to believers these words are!

Philippians 4:3: 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.

Revelation 3:5: 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.

Commentary: This is the opposite scenario as we had in Exodus 32:32-33 (see commentary above on that verse). There is no blotting out names from the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Revelation 13:8: 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.

Commentary: This is the fulfillment of Philippians 2:9-11.

Revelation 17:8: 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.

Commentary: In light of Psalm 139:16 (see commentary above on that verse), the reference here is to the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Revelation 20:11-15: ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 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. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Commentary: This is the Great White Throne Judgment. Only unbelievers experience this judgment. Those who trust their own works instead of Christ for their eternal hope are judged on the basis of the works and fall short of heaven (Romans 3:10-23; Ephesians 2:8-10). One sin is enough to disqualify them, but there are many more than one written of each of them in the additional volumes (James 2:10). In verse 15, the reference is clearly to the Lamb's Book of Life.

Revelation 21:27: 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.

Commentary: This refers to entrance into the Celestial City in the very presence of God.

Revelation 22:19: 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.