

Is



**Written in the
Book of Life?**

by Robert Curry

A crucial question! Since "anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).

As the Schofield Study Bible III puts it so chillingly: "an awful blank where the name might have been"

That's supposed to get our rapt attention! And our grateful response and action because God desires to save not only all Israel (Rom. 11:26) but all humans (1 Tim. 2:4).

The Book of Life is mentioned eight times in the New Testament, seven of those in the book of Revelation. That tells us that those of us in the End Time need to know about it. This is literally a matter of life and death—of the eternal variety!

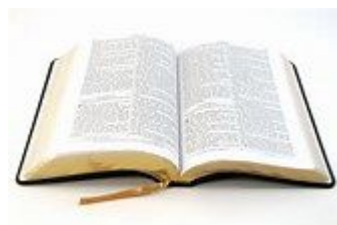


equals barely harvest.

If we keep God's Holy Day called Pentecost, we know that God and the Word planned from the foundation of the world that comparatively few "firstfruits" are entered into the Book of Life up to the time of Jesus Christ returning and starting the Millennium. Barley harvest

Consider the few names honored in the Hall of Faith (Heb. 11). Note that after all the effort by the Son of God for 3-1/2 years, there were only about 120 disciples (Acts 1:15). The Great Shepherd leads only a "little flock" (Luke 12:32). Narrow and difficult is "the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matt. 7:14). The corollary result is few names being written into the Book of Life at this time.

In contrast, the great harvest takes place during the Millennium but especially during the Great White Throne Judgment.



Rev. 20:12 tells how: For the billions in this second resurrection, "books were opened"---the books of the Bible [greek *biblion*]. As Jesus Christ and His saints open the people's minds to understand the Bible, another book---"the Book of Life"---is opened. The Book of

Life had been closed while satan was deceiving many at the close of the Millennium. It is opened now, and this is when the pages really fill up!

The Book of Life is a different book than the Bible, as Rev. 22:19 confirms. Most of our names aren't written in the Bible. How many Lazaruses, Mephibosheths and Sapphiras do you know!

When written into the Book of Life?

Short answer: When we receive the Holy Spirit.

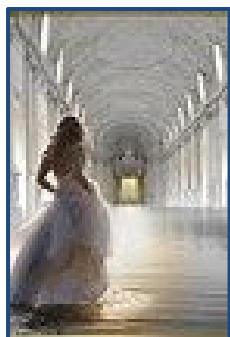
It was on Pentecost when God fired up His Church by giving His Holy Spirit which is His power, essence, presence, nature, character and truth.



"Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Rom. 8:9). Just as a human life starts at conception, so real spiritual life begins with conception---begettal---of the Holy Spirit. This is when the Holy Spirit, which is needed to understand the things of God, combines with our Spirit in Man which enables us to understand the things of man (1 Cor. 2:11). Not until we receive the Holy Spirit are we really living!

When the startled crowd cried out on Pentecost "what shall we do?", Peter gave the process that is still the same for us today: repent, be baptized and you shall receive the Holy Spirit when the minister of God lays hands on you and asks God to grant it to you (Acts 2:38, 8:17).

Friends, family and brethren rejoice with you at your baptism but not as much as angels in heaven (Luke 15:10). Woo-hoo, get out the book!



This begins the process of being born again from above. This puts us into the spiritual Church of God and engages us to become the Bride of Jesus Christ. Having your name in this wedding book puts you on course to be not a guest but the Bride!

This writes our "citizenship in heaven" (Php. 3:20). The Church of God is "the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven" (Heb.

12:23). It sounds like the Book of Life is like a census record.

Paul said Clement and other fellow workers in the faith were written in the Book of Life (Php. 4:3). Paul knew about this crucial book.

So did Daniel. God told Daniel that at the end-time of trouble "such as never was ... at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book" (12:1). "Your people" doesn't refer to the Jews but to God's people ready for the first resurrection, which included Daniel (verse 13).

Names written before any people had names?

Rev. 17:8 sounds as if names were written into the Book of Life before the foundation of the world. C'mon, God knowing about you by name before the heavens and earth were created? With this wrong notion, this verse would also be saying that many names were not written before they have even lived their life of good or evil? Bedrock principles of the Bible are impartiality and fairness of God and free moral agency.

Pentecost teaches that this verse is saying that from the foundation of the world God planned End-time events and determined that there would be some people in the Book of Life who would not wonder at the Beast.

Paul explains this in Eph. 1:9-14 (*New Living Translation*). "God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth." In verse 11 when Paul says "he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan," in the next verses he talks about Jews and Gentiles as a group. From the foundation of the world, God and the Word planned that there would be Jews and Gentiles and some being written into His Book of Life. Where you come into play, Paul says "when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago."

Luke 10:20 seems to not quite agree with the rest of the Bible that we are written in the Book of Life at baptism when we receive the Holy Spirit. The 70 Jesus sent out may have been baptized by John the Baptist but surely hadn't received the Holy Spirit yet since the 12 disciples hadn't yet

either. Did Jesus judge they were an exception? Or is it a translation issue? The word "are" is not backed by a Greek word and perhaps should be "will." The 70 were undoubtedly part of the 120 at Pentecost.

Rev. 21:27 gives the significant detail that while the Father and Jesus live and work together in perfect harmony and unity,

The Book of Life is the Lamb's

Jesus came that "they may have life, and ... have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

How just and fair that the Father "has committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22)—the Son of Man who came down and lived as a human.

That's why we firstfruits are being "redeemed from among men" because we "follow the Lamb wherever He goes" (Rev. 14:4). We commit to walking as He walked (1 John 2:6). We want His mind (Php. 2:5). We bring every thought into subjection to His obedience (2 Cor. 10:5). We overcome spiritual lethargy so we can be written into His Book of Life (Rev. 3:5).

Nothing is more important than cooperating with God to add us to His Book of Life

now as a firstfruit and that we continue to be written into it. If we want that, we will want to keep His Holy Day called Pentecost.

Staying Alive in the Book of Life

In the first mention of the Book of Life in the Bible, Moses asked God, if you won't forgive Israel for making the golden calf, then "blot me out of Your book which you have written" (Ex. 31:32).



Is he daft?! Why did Moses make such a consequential offer—to give up his eternal life?

Yes, he loved his people that much! Paul expressed the same incredible love in Rom. 9:3: "For I could wish that I myself were *accursed from Christ* for my brethren."

But Moses said what he said in response to what God said to him. "Let Me alone, that I may *destroy* them and *blot out their name from under heaven*" (Deut. 9:14). Did God only mean physical destruction and they would have their opportunity for salvation in the Great White Judge Judgment? Moses saw how furious God was and must have thought the worst!

Moses knew about the Book of Life. And he saw that God was "provoked" (verse 7) and "angry enough with you to have *destroyed* you" (verse 8). No wonder Moses graciously intervened with a second fast of 40 days and nights. A simple "They're sorry and won't do it again" wouldn't cut it!

Good thing for Israel that their leader was Moses! Good thing for Moses that God (the One who became Jesus Christ) rejected Moses' replacement offer: "Whoever has sinned against me, *I will blot him out of my book*" (Ex. 32:33). Yes, it's

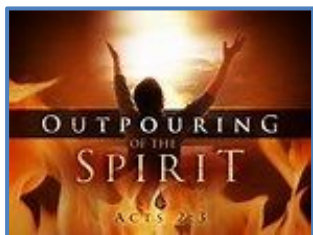
The "Lamb's Book of Life" (Rev. 21:27)

We mankind should be eternally thankful that our Judge is the Son of Man

(John 5:22) who came down and lived 3-1/2 years on the earth and was tempted in all points as we are (Heb. 4:15).

Well-meaning but false teachers wrongly claim “once saved, always saved.” They try to explain away the warning about sinning willfully in Heb. 10:26-29. They ignore Paul’s statement about making sure he wouldn’t be disqualified (1 Cor. 9:27). They pardon Jesus for talking about unpardonable sin (Matt. 12:31-32). They add or take away words from the Bible, or simply reject and disobey the ones there, which means “God shall take away his part from the Book of Life” (Rev. 22:19).

David also knew about the Book of Life. After his terrible sins regarding Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite, and the courageous life-saving rebuke by God’s prophet Nathan, David humbly pleaded, “Do not cast me away from



Your presence, and *do not take Your Holy Spirit from me*” (Psa. 51:11).

In Psa. 69:28 regarding people who “add iniquity to their iniquity,” David asked God, “And let them not come into Your righteousness. *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*”

Jesus is the One who writes our names into the Book of Life when we receive the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9) and He will be the One who erases or blots out somebody. It is so encouraging that Jesus said nobody can pluck us out of His hand” (John 10:28).

When satan asked for Peter, to sift him as wheat, Jesus prayed for him that his strength would not fail! (Luke 22:31). Satan was only allowed to trouble Job as much as YHWH (Jesus back then) permitted. Jesus has our back—and the rest of us!

If Jesus is forced to remove our name from His Book of Life, it will be because we neglected so great a salvation (Heb. 2:3), let another take our crown because we don’t hold fast what we have (Rev. 3:11), or buried our talent as an unprofitable servant through laziness and fear (Matt. 25:14-31). It will be our fault!

God and the Word’s planned before the foundation of the world to start the

New Testament Church of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost is also called the Feast of Firstfruits because it pictures calling and harvesting firstfruits who will help Jesus Christ reap the big harvest during the Millennium and Great White Throne Judgment on earth. The firstfruits will become kings, judges, teachers and priests.

It's interesting in Nehemiah that priests who returned from Babylon wanting to serve in Jerusalem, unless "registered by genealogy ... were excluded from the priesthood as defiled" (Neh. 7:64). What a striking parallel! We would-be priests coming out of modern Babylon better be found in the Book of Life!

Paul says to each of us: "This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self-discipline" (2 Tim. 1:6-7, *New Living Translation*).

We must "be even more diligent to make your call and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10). We must "follow the Lamb wherever He goes" (Rev. 1:14). We must be like the disciples gathered at Pentecost in Acts 2:1. Topping modern attempts to see how many bodies they could stuff into a VW, the 120 were "all in one Accord!" Hope that wasn't the unpardonable sin in your book!

Today Church of God leaders are ramping up brethren to live in harmony with what the Father and Son are doing, in unity through the Holy Spirit.



We must "overcome" so we can "be clothed in white garments." Engage to become the Bride of Jesus Christ and be registered in the wedding book as the Bride, not a guest! With God's help we must overcome now because there is no greater power than the Holy Spirit so we have everything we need now. Then the Lamb and husband will say "I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life" (Rev. 3:5).

Does the Book of Life Include More Than Just Your Name?

Is the Book of Life more than just a list of names? Why would our omnipotent all-knowing God need or want a Book of Life anyway? Our Ancient of Days does not share our senior moments!

Well, yes, but the Bible shows

Records and lists are very important to God



So it's no wonder they're important to us. Many of us have a cherished family book. My oldest and youngest sisters have put one together and shared it with me.

Our Creator who fashioned us in His image knows we love genealogical research. The Book of Genesis contains nine genealogies (chapters 4, 5 and 11). Chapter 10's Table of Nations is technically an ethnography.



Nations keep census records. In Num. 1:2 the Lord directed Moses to take a census of all men age 20 and older who could go to war in Israel. In Nehemiah's time, God put it in his heart to register the nobles, rulers and people (Neh. 7:5). During the reign of Darius the Persian, a record was kept of Levites and priests who had been heads of their fathers' houses (12:22).

In Acts 1:15 instead of saying there were about 120 disciples gathered for Pentecost, the wording is "the number of names." A church directory? Granted, they didn't need phone numbers! Thanks to Saul, maybe cell numbers. But don't we always want to keep track of and contact each other.

God's Church of the firstborn is registered in heaven" (Heb. 12:23) because they become citizens of God's Kingdom and Family (Php. 3:20) when they are written into the Book of Life upon receiving the Holy Spirit.

More than our names

Estimates of how many people have ever lived range from 50 billion to 140 billion. How many names would legibly fit on an 8-1/2" x 11" yellow ruled sheet? If 50, that would require one billion pages. It's a good thing the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev. 21:27) is a spiritual book! After Jesus adds a name, I'm not sure a human could tote it back to the shelf! Oh, pardon me, back to the cloud?

The Bible indicates that the Book of Life holds more than just names.



David wrote "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book" (Psa. 56:8), New Living Translation). God wants an intimate relationship with His children and watches us every day (Psa. 139:1-3). Is the Lamb's Book of Life like a diary?

Apparently this is the same "book of remembrance" written before God when "those who feared the Lord spoke to one another" (Mal. 3:16. God treasures good fellowship that builds the Family of God!—that builds life!

A third scripture to consider regarding what's recorded in the Book of Life, Rev. 20:12 says, "And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books." This verse mentions the books of the Bible and the separate Book of Life. Our works will be judged by the standards of the Bible but will our works be written in the Book of Life? Does the Lamb use a good court reporter for those of us under judgment now (1 Pet. 4:17)?

Is Jesus recording in His Book of Life not only our names but our

Life stories?

Who doesn't love a good biography! And what better author than the Lamb

to give us all a true and fair write-up!

As we've seen, the Bible gives some short but very interesting clues about the Book of Life that we can ponder and speculate about.

What we know for sure: Let's each pray we respond to God's calling. The goodness of God leads us to repentance (Rom. 2:4). Let's repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit when a minister of God lays hands on us (Acts 2:38). Our names will then be written into the Book of Life.



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