

1 - What Do We Mean by the "Book of Life"?

2 - "Judgment Seat of Christ"

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At the Second Coming we understand that Jesus will gather His people, whoever they are, into the Celestial Realm before the final *Bowls of Wrath* are poured out into the Earth. And whom does He gather? The "*elect*". And when does He gather them? "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days.*" The wording here suggests that there may be another group (not so "*elect*") whose gathering does not happen "*immediately*" but is delayed for some time. There is a suggestion of this also in Daniel 12 where it appears that there could be two deliverances or resurrections, marked by two different time spans (each time span starting from the entrance of the *Abomination of Desolation* into the Jerusalem "*holy place*" and continuing until Christ returns):

- 1) "*A time, times, and half a time*" which from other Scriptures we understand as a period of 1,260 days. (Daniel 12:7, Revelation 12:6,14)
- 2) And then a period of 1,290 days, 30 days after the immediate deliverance. (Daniel 12:11)
- 3) There is even a third time span of 1,335 days. (Daniel 12:12) This last time span seems to signal the end of the *Wrath of God* - 1,335 days after the entrance of the "*abomination of desolation*" into the "*holy place*" in Jerusalem. And whoever makes it that far, to the end of the 1,335 days, whether gathered into the Heavenly Realm, or has managed to survive on Earth during the Plagues of the *Wrath of God*, will be "*blessed*" to enter into the glorious Age of the Millennium.

This era after Christ's Second Coming seems to be the time for what is known as the *Judgment Seat of Christ*. ([2Corinthians 5:10](#)) And this Judgment links with another passage in 1Corinthians 3:12-15 about "*the Day*" when "*the fire will test each man's work, of what sort it is. If any*

man's work... endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

Did Jesus say anything about this? In Matthew 24 we read, ***"But he who endures to the end shall be saved."*** (24:13) Saved from what? As 1Corinthians 3:15 notes, ***"If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."*** He or she can be "saved" from Hell, true enough, yet not saved from the "fire" that will burn up their "work".

Up until this point in Matthew 24, we learn that ***"many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another... And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."*** (Matthew 24:10,12) In other words, the wave of spiritual Darkness will be so strong then, that many who were believers at one time in their lives will, like Judas Iscariot, betray that knowledge, their conscience, and go down the path of betrayal.

Even if they are spared from the *Lake of Fire*, they will still have to feel the chastening rod of the Savior. It may come in the form of regret over lost opportunities to stand strong in their faith when it was needed, who knows. Perhaps this is what is meant by the phrases ***"hurt by the Second Death"*** which has ***"power"*** over those who are not eligible to live and reign with Christ during the Millennium. (Revelation 2:11, 20:4,6) They are still members of the Kingdom but unable to participate fully in the life of the Kingdom.

Is that what means the phrase, ***"burned... through fire"***? Is it like receiving a touch of the *Second Death*? Some insight about this might be found in Revelation 2:10-11, where we learn that the persecuted saints in the Smyrna church - the overcomers, who are ***"faithful until death"*** and receive ***"the crown of life... shall not be hurt by the second death"***. And in Revelation 20 we learn that those ***"who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark... over such the second death has no power."*** (20:4,6)

But what about those in the Smyrna Church who were believers but chose to compromise rather than suffer persecution or martyrdom? Will

they *“be hurt by the second death?”* Or in the End Time, what about those believers who choose to take the *Mark of the Beast* rather than suffer deprivation under the economic system of the anti-Christ world government? Will *“the second death”* have *“power”* over them?

Although in their hearts they could not worship the Antichrist, to take the *Mark* is a compromise and, of course, a sign of unfaithfulness. (For more information on this point, [link to this passage](#).) Or what about those whom Jesus mentions, *“he who endures to the end shall be saved”*? (Matthew 24:13) The implication here is that during those trying times when *“lawlessness will abound”* and *“the love of many will grow cold”* and *“many... will betray one another”*, some believers will fail to *“endure to the end”*. ([Matthew 24:10,12](#))

If they did once come to the Lord, then they will be spared from the *Lake of Fire*, but it does not mean they will be spared from having to give account of their lives. And 1Corinthians 3:15 focuses directly on this question, saying that a person can be *“saved, yet so as through fire”*. Well, that sounds like a touch of the *Second Death*. The *Lake of Fire* is called that because *“fire”* burns out impurities. For those who have come to Christ, however, the big difference is they are within the Kingdom of God. Those who are sent to the *Lake of Fire* are not. They are separated from the Presence of God. They rejected God, and so they are left to see what it is like to live in a place where He is not present.

Any good father knows he must chastise his children when they go astray and are disobedient. Believers who turn their backs on the Lord will be spared from the *Lake of Fire*, but *“salvation”* does not mean that our Heavenly Father can overlook their disobedience nor the harm that they have caused. So as 1Corinthians 3:15 says, *“they will suffer loss... saved, yet so as by fire”*. This burning out of the impurities will be downright uncomfortable - just as it will be for those in the *Lake of Fire*.

God doesn't have to use the Devil to chastise His people. We may think that entering God's Kingdom means only blessing, no hurt or pain. But God is quite capable of offering the blessing of chastisement, especially if He knows it will have long-term benefit in the life of one of His children. The *Book of Life*, God's promise of reward for His faithful children, is not simply an escape hatch from Hell. A person who comes to the Lord won't

be cast out into Hell, that is true. But for those who need it, God is quite capable of exercising His merciful chastisement.

Thankfully, when He exercises it, the chastisement is accompanied by mercy and consolation. We might call this a form of “tough love” - similar to what reformatories and rehabilitation centers are supposed to offer in our Earthly Realm to those citizens who need it. Why then shouldn’t something similar, even better and more effective, exist in God’s Realm for those Kingdom citizens who deserve and need it?

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Hebrews 10:31) So perhaps that is what the phrase *“hurt by the second death”* means - not actual incarceration in the *Lake of Fire*, but the fate of having to endure a certain amount of purgatorial *“fire”* of chastisement - under God’s care of course.

Those who become rulers with Christ in the Millennium are those *“who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”* (Revelation 20:4) We might say that these are among those who are *“saved to the uttermost”*. Their names were not blotted out from the *Book of Life*. Others will be saved too, of course. Even if their names must be blotted out from the *Book of Life*, there are other books apparently, meant perhaps for other regions within the Kingdom. As mentioned earlier, our conception of what the Kingdom is like may require some stretching, an understanding that it is much more comprehensive and multi-levelled than we may think.

Perhaps it is safe to say that, with so many “books” a person’s name will at least not be lost - preserved for future reference we might say. Having begun on the journey, many a soul, every soul, will have opportunity to continue in the Afterlife. Those who were not given the privilege of living and reigning with Christ in the Millennium, those who were as the five foolish virgins, those who betrayed the Lord in some way, will have their opportunity to make things right. But whether or how this will happen, only God knows. One thing we do know is that if a person has come to Christ, there is no possibility of their being cast out of the Kingdom.

And it is indeed true that many who have come to Christ are not ready to live and reign with Him. And they will dwell in their respective realms of the spirit world but without the honor of living and reigning with Christ during the Millennium. They are not sent out of the Kingdom of God for they are part of God's family. But as a parent must do with a disobedient child, our Father in Heaven blesses us with chastening, which for the moment is painful but *"afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness"*. (Hebrews 12:11) This domain of *"shame and everlasting disgrace"* is not the real Hell, the judgment or separation of a soul into the *Lake of Fire*. But it is the hell of failure, the hell of turning one's back on the Lord, the hell of not living up to God's calling, in putting one's own will above God's will. These memories are not forgotten the moment one enters Heaven. In time however, this *"shame and everlasting disgrace"*, this remorse over past failures, are wiped away and forgotten, and one is left with the treasures and blessings of his or her heavenly existence. (By the way, this word *"everlasting"* is better understood as *"beyond-earthly-reality"* than the idea of an *"infinite length of time"*.)

If a person is raised *"to shame and everlasting disgrace"* (Daniel 12:2, NLT), that in itself is a form of chastisement - something that, if a person could foresee it coming, he or she would want to avoid at all costs. (So much depends on our decisions in this earthly life.) Their situation could be like that of the five *"foolish virgins"*, saddened over being unready to join the celebrations held at the Groom's arrival. (Matthew 25:11-12)

Nevertheless, *"O Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?... thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1Corinthians 15:55,57 - KJV) *"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."* (Revelation 21:4) In the end there will be reconciliation and peace and the joy of Heaven for everyone who has come to Christ.

Still, it is wise to remember that there is a great deal of honor and reward for those who are faithful throughout their lives. In the Millennium, for example, it is those *"who had not worshiped the beast... and had not received his mark"* who receive the honor to live and reign with Christ during the Millennium. (Revelation 20:4)

But for others there is a stage of preparation that some of us, many of us perhaps, will have to go through in order to be ready for entrance into the full glories of the Heavenly life. And maybe that is what is meant by the realm of Purgatory: a training ground, a preparation stage, needed before full entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven can be granted.

As for those who never knew Christ from ages past, there does seem to be a second “edition” of the *Book of Life* at the end of the Millennium for those who graduate from the realm of *Death and Hades*. They have proven by their works, probably in the Spirit Realm as well as in their former earthly lives, that they are worthy to be written in the *Book of Life*. ([Revelation 20:12-15](#)) And at the *Great White Throne Judgment*, they are spared from the *Lake of Fire* and granted entrance into the *New Heaven and Earth* and the *Heavenly City*. ([Revelation 21:27](#))

(By the way, about the *Lake of Fire*, what is it for? Is it just a dead end, or is it a place of purifying “fire”, designed to burn out the dross in the souls of those who deserve and need it? This question is explored more thoroughly in the Post [“Lake of Fire, What is it For?”](#))

Now regarding the question of Christians who take the *Mark of the Beast*, we may wonder, how is this possible? For in that final era of *Great Tribulation*, it is said that “*All who dwell on the earth will worship him [the Beast], whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*” (Revelation 13:8) If they were born-again believers who once came to Christ, then they are written in the *Book of Life*. This may be speculation, but it could well be they had to be blotted out of the *Book of Life’s* “first edition”. But their names are still preserved for the second or later editions.

Scripture states that those who worship the *Beast* or his *Image* AND receive the *Mark* are destined for the *Lake of Fire*. A born-again believer cannot in their inner being worship the *Beast*. However, it is possible they could compromise and take the *Mark of the Beast*. So because such a person is not a real “worshiper” of the *Beast*, they don’t quite qualify for the *Lake of Fire* destiny. However, somewhere down the line (in the Afterlife), that compromise will rebound on them in the form of some measure of “*shame and disgrace*”.

Now when Christ comes, who wants to have to “*shrink from Him in shame*”? How much better to “*abide in Him, so that when He appears we may have confidence.*” (1John 2:28, ESV) Who wants to miss out on the celebrations, to lose their crown of life, that greater salvation or “*better resurrection*” (Hebrews 11:35)? How much better, “*when the marriage of the Lamb has come*”, to be invited with those of whom it is written, “*His wife has made herself ready*”, and to be “*arrayed in fine linen... the righteous acts of the saints*”. (Revelation 19:7-8) How much better to be among the five wise virgins “*who were ready and went in with him [the Bridegroom] to the wedding*”? (Matthew 25:10)

This seems to be what it means then to have one’s name written in the *Book of Life* in the present Age. It is the kind of salvation that permits one to be “*called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!*” (Revelation 19:9) Presumably, the *Marriage Supper* happens about the same time as the *Judgment Seat of Christ*. And this Judgment, like all judgments, will bring about a separation. In fact, the word *krisis* for “judgment” also has a meaning in Greek that conveys the idea of “separation”.

So, if one’s name has been blotted out from the *Book of Life* (as seems possible from Revelation 3:5 and 22:19, even Exodus 32:33), that means they have been separated from the greater rewards that could have been theirs if they had been faithful. However, they are still saved, thankful to be citizens of the Kingdom of God. If their names are blotted out from the *Book of Life*, then it means they once did have their names written in it, which means they were “*born again*”, and Christ’s promise is still in effect: “*the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*” (John 6:37)

As human history marches on into the Millennial Age, the *Book of Life*, which was the register of those who were rewarded for their faithfulness during the Age prior to Christ’s Second Coming, becomes the register of those who, after His Coming, have proven their faithfulness during the Age of the Millennium, whether in a Purgatory-like Realm (*Death and Hades?*) or alive on Earth. In this new edition, their names are written, and they will be spared from the *Lake of Fire* and go on to live in the *New Heaven and Earth* and will even be permitted entrance into the *Heavenly City*. ([Revelation 21:27](#))

Another question that comes up, does the Bible tell us that there exists

a Realm known as Purgatory? In Revelation 20 we learn that during the Age of the Millennium, the souls who are in the Realm of *Death and Hades* are awaiting the final *Great White Throne Judgment*. *Death and Hades* is not the *Lake of Fire*. It is not Heaven either. Perhaps we could see it as a sort of neutral holding cell type of region. Now, the question is, what are those souls doing all that time? Will they be active and making decisions? God is certainly more than able to give them plenty to do and plenty of interaction with others. And so, by the time the *Great White Throne Judgment* rolls around, their works in that Realm will tell whether they have come around to embrace the Light or if they prefer to continue on the path of selfishness and rebellion against God. The “*books*” and the *Book of Life* will have all that information, and their future destiny will be marked out for them.

As for those who were blessed to live and reign with Christ during the Millennium, they have, we might say, graduated. They are in a new stage of growth, dwelling in the Heavenly City, and the *Book of Life* no longer applies to them.

A question may be, how or where does God draw the line? How can one know where one stands? Well, that is something only God knows. As far as we are concerned, our focus should be that of keeping alive our personal relationship with our Heavenly Father. And that is what He wants more than anything else. And to be sure, if one focuses too much on his or her standing in the Afterlife, that is not going to bring about the desired result of a full reward. It is just a sign that we are not abiding in Him but looking too much at what we expect to gain out of our “connection” with God.

Good works, the kind that God is pleased with, stem from a heart that is hungering and thirsting for God without a whole lot of personal agenda. Keeping alive our personal relationship with God is what will enable us to do the kind of works that will prepare us to be “*arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*” (Revelation 19:8)

Now in Daniel 12, verse 2, we learn that “*many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake*”. “*Many*” does not mean “*all*”. So this is not the general Resurrection at the end of the Millennium - what is known

as the *Great White Throne Judgment* when all those have not yet been judged will be judged. What we read about in Daniel 12:2 is, we could say, a selective Resurrection of the body of God's people from all ages at the time of the Second Coming. And they will appear before what is known as the *Judgment Seat of Christ*. And presumably, the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb* happens about the same time. The only other Resurrection, of course, was that of Jesus Christ. And His is the one that makes the other Resurrections possible.

At the end of the Millennial Age, to be written in the *Book of Life* means to be spared from getting sent to the *Lake of Fire*. But at the end of this present Age, to be written in the *Book of Life* means to be spared from having to endure seeing one's works burned and having to suffer the shame of being "*saved, yet so as through fire*". Those who were "*born again*" in the present Age but were disobedient and failed to live up to their destiny are already spared from the *Lake of Fire* because they have come to Christ and won't be cast out of God's Presence or the Kingdom of God. "*The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*" (John 6:37).

However, it's possible they will find themselves in a lesser realm. Where or with whom that might be is a matter of conjecture. Looking at the example of Abraham's nephew Lot might offer some insight. Lot selfishly chose to dwell in the fertile region of the plain of Jordan instead of leaving it for his uncle. ([Genesis 13:10-13](#)) And Lot ended up living in Sodom as a judge among the evil dwellers of that city. "*Just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.)*" (2Peter 2:7-8, KJV) Perhaps it will be the destiny of wayward Christians to dwell in a lesser realm like this. Well, who knows? We can't know everything about how God will assign His people their stations in the Afterlife.

In closing, here is a quote that seems to capture the essence of what this study has tried to articulate regarding the *Book of Life*:

Some passages suggest that names could potentially be blotted out ([Revelation 3:5](#)), while others emphasize God's sustaining power ([John 10:28-29](#)). The tension serves as both comfort for believers and an incentive to remain steadfast... the Book of Life is an active reality

- one with the most profound personal and eternal consequences.
[from [Biblehub](#)]

So that offers a helpful perspective: salvation bestows “comfort” to the believer and with that also the “incentive to remain steadfast”. So, although we may not understand exactly what is meant by the *Book of Life*, there should be no misunderstanding the importance of remaining steadfast: *“do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you!”* (Hebrews 10:35, NLT) And *“Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”* (2Timothy 2:19)

Long ago it was made clear: *“let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit; let the earth cause them both to sprout; I the LORD have created it.”* (Isaiah 45:8, ESV) Salvation and righteousness are supposed to go together. But salvation without righteousness can be quite a disappointment. And so the *New Testament* exhorts, *“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.”* (2Timothy 2:12) *“We are children of God... heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”* (Romans 8:17)