Book of Life—Confession or Denial

*A Partial Exposition of* [*Revelation 3:5*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.5&t=NKJV)

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(Taken from [Judgment Seat of Christ BOOK](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-one.php#Judgment%20Seat%20of%20Christ%20BOOK) by Arlen Chitwood of [Lamp Broadcast](http://lampbroadcast.org/))

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The possibility of Christians having their names *blotted out* of the book of life, in accord with [Revelation 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.5&t=NKJV), has troubled many individuals. Such individuals view the book of life as a record containing the names of all who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and they know that for a Christian to have his name blotted out of such a book is an absolute impossibility.

One’s eternal salvation is just as secure as the finished work of Christ upon which it rests. And to infer that a Christian could possibly one day lose his eternal salvation would be bringing into question the complete efficacy of this finished work, or of the corresponding work of the Spirit breathing life into the one having no life (on the basis of Christ’s finished work).

The problem emanates from wrongly associating “the book of life” with *eternal salvation*. God has many books; and in these books He keeps records of many different things, records which will one day be opened (*cf*. [Psalm 56:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+56.8&t=NKJV); [139:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+139.16&t=NKJV); [Zechariah 5:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+5.1-3&t=NKJV); [Malachi 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Malachi+3.16&t=NKJV); [Revelation 5:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.1-2&t=NKJV); [13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+13.8&t=NKJV); [20:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.12&t=NKJV)).

Note, for example, that at the future judgment of the unsaved dead in [Revelation 20:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.11-15&t=NKJV) a number of books will be opened, including “*the book of life*” ([Revelation 20:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.12&t=NKJV)). God has a library in heaven, and *the book of life* is only one book within this library. A book which seems to be entirely separate and distinct, but often confused with the book of life is *the Lamb’s book of life* in [Revelation 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+13.8&t=NKJV) (*cf*. [Revelation 21:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+21.27&t=NKJV)). This book would appear to be the place wherein the names of redeemed individuals have been inscribed rather than the book of life in [Revelation 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.5&t=NKJV); [20:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.12&t=NKJV).

The book of life will be opened at the judgments of both the saved and the unsaved. The entire scene in [Revelation 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.5&t=NKJV) has to do with issues of the judgment seat of Christ, with *the book of life* being the only book from God’s library of books singled out and mentioned by name. The same thing can be found in the judgment of the unsaved dead in [Revelation 20:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.11-15&t=NKJV). *The book of life* alone is singled out and mentioned by name.

The purpose and content of the book of life are clearly revealed in [Revelation 20:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.12&t=NKJV): “…the dead were judged out of those things which were *written in the books, according to their works*.” The book of life is a book, among other books, containing *the deeds/works* of individuals, both those of the save and those of the unsaved; and from the emphasis placed upon the book of life in connection with both judgments, along with information concerning other books in Scripture, one could conclude that this is probably God’s primary record book containing *the deeds/works* of every individual.

Other books also record *deeds/works*, such as those mentioned in [Psalm 56:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+56.8&t=NKJV) and [Malachi 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Malachi+3.16&t=NKJV). But the primary record book in this realm, one in which a name can be retained or blotted out (depending on the record of that individual contained in the book), appears to be “the book of life.”

The blotting of one’s name out of the book of life in [Revelation 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.5&t=NKJV) is strictly for the non-overcomer, with the Messianic Era in view, and has nothing to do with eternal verities. One’s relationship to Christ must be looked upon as a settled, closed matter prior to judgment, a matter which can *never* enter into any future judgment in any fashion or form.

Different companies of the saved are judged at different times, with their works in view (works recorded in books [[Ezekiel 20:34-38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezekiel+20.34-38&t=NKJV); [Matthew 25:34-40](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.34-40&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 3:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.11-15&t=NKJV); [Revelation 20:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.4-6&t=NKJV)]); and the unsaved are judged at a subsequent time, with their works in view as well (works also recorded in books [[Revelation 20:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.11-15&t=NKJV)]).

There is no such thing in Scripture as a judgment of the saved and a judgment of the unsaved occurring together at the same time; nor is there any such thing in Scripture as the issue of one’s eternal salvation or eternal damnation being brought up at any future judgment. Judgment in this respect, for both the saved and the unsaved, is past; and this past judgment can never be bought up as an issue again.

All future judgments will be based strictly upon *the works of those being judged*, which renders it impossible for issues surrounding eternal verities to ever enter into these judgments. Relative to the saved, judgment has already occurred, based on their *belief* and Christ’s *finished work*; relative to the unsaved, judgment, as well, has already occurred, based on *their unbelief* and Christ’s *finished work*:

“*He that believeth on him is not condemned* [‘judged’]: *but he that believeth not is condemned already* [‘has already been judged’], *because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*” ([John 3:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.18&t=NKJV)).

The book of life contains records that have been *lived*, and the blotting of a Christian’s name out of this book follows his judgment on the basis of that which has been recorded in the book and involves millennial verities alone. Such a Christian will be shown, on the basis of his own works (works burned at the judgment seat), to have been overcome; and he will suffer loss — the loss of his soul/life. Rather than his name being left intact, it will be blotted out of the book of life; and he will be among those denied a position of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.

CONFESSION OR DENIAL

Christ has extended a twofold promise to the overcomer in Sardis concerning his name: 1) “*I will not* [Gk., double negative, ‘I will most certainly not’] *blot out his name out of the book of life*,” but 2) “*I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels*.” This will occur in heaven *following* issues of the judgment seat, for the person whose name is to be confessed must first be shown to have overcome through the record contained in the book of life (and possibly other books as well).

Christ referred to this future event (along with the negative aspect [*denial*]) on at least two occasions during His earthly ministry ([Matthew 10:32-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+10.32-33&t=NKJV); [Luke 12:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+12.8-9&t=NKJV)). The verses in Matthew refer to *confession* or *denial* before “my Father which is in heaven,” and the verses in Luke refer to confession or denial before “the angels of God.” Further, in Matthew, this matter appears in a context referring to the salvation or loss of one’s soul ([Matthew 10:38-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+10.38-39&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Matthew 16:24-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.24-27&t=NKJV)). This places the entire matter, as in [Revelation 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.5&t=NKJV), in connection with events surrounding findings and determinations at the judgment seat.

Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, calls attention to the same thing ([2 Timothy 2:10-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.10-13&t=NKJV)); and the contextual setting has to do with *a future salvation, the glory of Christ, and the coming reign of Christ*:

“*Therefore I endure* [‘patiently endure’] *all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal* [‘age-lasting’] *glory.*

*It is a faithful saying: for if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.*

*If we suffer* [‘patiently endure’ (same word in the Greek text as in [2 Timothy 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.10&t=NKJV))], *we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us*” ([2 Timothy 2:10-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.10-12&t=NKJV)).

Then [2 Timothy 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.12&t=NKJV) refers to the fact that Christ cannot accept as faithful an individual who has proven unfaithful. To do so would be to deny His Own character. He must remain faithful to do exactly what He has said that He would do concerning confession or denial of Christians before His Father and before His Father’s angels.

Thus, the parallel Scriptures to the confession of one’s name before the Father and before His angels, as revealed in [Revelation 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.5&t=NKJV), have to do with *confessing Christ before men* and *patiently enduring*. And it is within these two realms that the entire matter is set forth.

*Confessing Christ* *before men* has nothing to do with a public confession of one’s faith in Christ at the point of salvation, as is often taught; but such a confession is for those who are *already saved*, and this confession will be a natural outworking in the life of one exercising faithfulness to his calling. Confession or denial of Christians by Christ *in heaven*, during that coming day, is conditioned upon their overcoming or being overcome and has the coming Messianic Era in view.

And confession or denial of Christ by Christians *here upon the earth,* during the present time, should be looked upon as having the same end in view. There is a life to be lived, and the unfolding of this life under the leadership of the Lord should bring praise, honor, and glory to the Lord, as the individual looks out ahead toward events at the judgment seat and the reign of Christ which follows.

*Patiently enduring*, within its context, in [2 Timothy 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.12&t=NKJV) must be understood in the light of Paul’s patient endurance in verse ten. He patiently endured *all things* for the sake of other Christians in order that they might obtain the salvation set before them (salvation of the soul) and occupy a position with Christ in the kingdom. The record of Paul’s life (now recorded in the book of life, awaiting the opening of this book at the judgment seat) was one of concern for others, with the coming kingdom of Christ in view. He let nothing stand in his way; and Christians today are to have a comparable ministry within the scope of their calling, with the same end in view, as they too *patiently endure all things.*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

God has offered rewards for faithfulness; and Christians are exhorted to “strive [Gk. *agonizomai*, ‘exert every possible effort’]” in the present race of the faith, with rewards in view, while moving toward the goal of their calling (*cf*. [Luke 13:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+13.24&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 9:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.25&t=NKJV); [1 Timothy 6:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.12&t=NKJV)). Rewards are offered as compensations in order to encourage Christians as they are being tested and tried while engaged in the Lord’s business during the time of their present pilgrim journey. And compensations of this nature are not to be taken lightly. Disdaining, ignoring, or neglecting proffered rewards is completely out of line with any Scriptural presentation of this subject.

The mother of James and John possessed godly aspirations for her two sons concerning future rewards, James and John themselves possessed the same aspirations, the other disciples in like manner possessed such aspirations, and Christians are exhorted to also possess aspirations of this nature ([Matthew 19:27-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+19.27-30&t=NKJV); [20:20-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+20.20-28&t=NKJV); [Mark 10:35-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+10.35-45&t=NKJV); [1 Corinthians 9:24-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.24-27&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 1:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.17-18&t=NKJV); [1 Timothy 6:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.11-12&t=NKJV); [2 Timothy 4:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.7-8&t=NKJV); [Titus 2:12-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Titus+2.12-13&t=NKJV); [2 Peter 1:10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+1.10-11&t=NKJV)). Decisions and determinations concerning *receiving rewards* or *suffering loss* will emanate out of issues surrounding the judgment seat, and the realization of these decisions and determinations will be brought to pass in “the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ.”

A day is coming in the near future when every Christian will be called to an accounting. *Lives lived* will be reviewed from the records which the righteous Judge will have on hand. When the books containing records of *the deeds/works* of Christians are opened, there will be *a just recompense* on the basis of that which is revealed. Every Christian will be judged *solely* on the basis of the things written in these books, and the entire matter will be carried out in *an equitable, just manner. Receiving rewards or suffering loss will,* in each instance, be *commensurate with revealed works*. There will be no exceptions.

The Christians’ *deeds/works*, emanating from faithfulness or unfaithfulness, will come under scrutiny through being subjected to fire. Some works will be revealed as comparable to “gold, silver, precious stones” and endure the fire; other works will be revealed as comparable to “wood, hay, stubble” and be consumed by the fire.

Christians with works enduring the fire will *receive rewards* and *positions* in the kingdom; Christians with works consumed by the fire will *suffer loss* and be *denied positions* in the kingdom. Such will be the outcome of the judgment of all Christians at the end of this dispensation, preceding the Messianic Era.