



HOAW Newsletter

*For I will be merciful
toward their iniquities,
and I will remember
their sins no more.”
Hebrews 8:12*

August 2023

HELPING MEN LIVE LIVES OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR

Can a believer's name be blotted out from the Book of Life?

Dr. Greg Bourgond

On a recent session of Guy Talk with Bill Arnold, Faith Radio, a question was asked, “Can a believer’s name be **blotted out** from the Book of Life?” Answering that question requires digging deeper in the Bible. I will first explain what the Bible means by the ‘Book of Life,’ and finally examine the Scriptures regarding ‘blotting out’ and what it has to do with our assurance of salvation.

Let’s begin first with the phrase ‘**Book of Life.**’

The term “book of life” is found 7 times in the Bible, once in Philippians 4:3 and 6 times in the book of Revelation. The same book

of life is also called the Lamb’s book of life in (Revelation 13:8 & 21:27).

Revelation 20:15 declares, *“If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”* **The Book of Life is the set of names of those who will live with God forever in heaven. It is the roll of those who are saved.**

This Book of Life is also mentioned in Revelation 3:5; 20:12; and Philippians 4:3. The same book is also called the Lamb’s Book of Life because it contains the names of those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus (Revelation 13:8; 21:27).

How can you be sure your name is written in the Book of Life?

Be sure you’re saved. Repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord.

Romans 10:8-10 “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe (in the Greek believe means to trust in, rely upon, and cling to) in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”

Notice that we receive Christ as Savior AND Lord. It is not a two-step process where you receive Him as Savior and sometime later embrace Him as Lord. Receiving Him as Savior accrues to our account the benefits of redemption and eternal life. Receiving Him as Lord includes the obligations and duties as a member of His family. Recognizing the Lordship of Christ means that you understand you are under new management. You are

not your own, you were bought with a heavy price.

One other important note – nowhere in the Bible do you find the phrase ‘accept’ Him as Savior and Lord. What you find is ‘receive’ Him as Savior and Lord. Who is accepting whom? He is accepting us!

Back to our original question, “Can a believer’s name be **blotted out** from the Book of Life?”

The term **blot or blotted out** appears 56 times in 27 verses in the Bible, many of which have nothing to do with our question.

For instance, in **Isaiah 43:25** God tells us *“I am he who **blots out** your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins (ESV).*

In **Isaiah 44:22** God tells Israel *“I have **blotted out** your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.”*

In **Acts 3:19** Peter tells people gathered near the Solomon’s portico to *“Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be **blotted out.**”*

These verses emphasize the fact that God does not hold our sins against us once covered by the blood of the Lamb. **He does not hold our sins against us.** This is good news! Consider the following scriptural passages.

Hebrews 8:12 For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, **and I will remember their sins no more.”**

Hebrews 10:17 **I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”**

Jeremiah 31:34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and **I will remember their sin no more.”**

Romans 4:7-8 Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom **the Lord will not count his sin.”**

Isaiah 38:17 Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, **for you have cast all my sins behind your back.**

It is comforting to know that God “remembers our sin no more.” All of our sins, past, present, and future, were nailed to the cross. When Jesus declared, “It is finished” He meant it.

Remember, the Enemy will repeatedly remind you of the sins of your past. God want to bring you to the victory of your future. The struggle is in the present but God is God and Satan is not. God does not shame us. He may convict us of unconfessed sin but He does not shame us. Our sins were cast behind God’s back. So, when you reminded of your past, it is not of God. It is the Enemy who wants you to revisit your past and shame you so you will not become who God has made you to be.

With regard to our question, can a believer’s name be blotted out of the Book of Life, three specific passages are relevant.

In **Exodus 32: 31-33** Moses condemns the golden calf worshipped by the Israelites while he was on the mountain with God, he says to them, *“Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.” But the LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book.”*

In **Psalms 69:27-28** David pleads with the Lord to destroy his enemies. He says, *“Add to them punishment upon punishment; may they have no acquittal from you. **Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous.”***

While English translations usually translate the Hebrew phrase as ‘the book of life,’ it can be literally translated as ‘the book of living ones.’ This rendering suggests that David’s request would simply be that God would take their lives.

In the book of Revelation Jesus dictates seven letters to seven churches located in modern day Turkey; five received condemnation from the Lord while two were commended. To the church in Sardis (**Revelation 3:1-5**) He says, *‘I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. Yet you have still a few*

names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

How do we reconcile these verses that seem to imply that our names can be blotted out from the Book of Life? Do these verses imply that a Christian once saved can lose their salvation and be blotted out from the Book of Life?

First and foremost, when we receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, ALL our sins are forgiven and we receive eternal life.

- **1 John 1:7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son *cleanses us from all sin*.
- From the cross, Jesus said, "It is finished!" (**John 19:30**). No other sacrifice would ever be needed. Sin, all sin, had been atoned.
- **John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has *eternal life*; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.
- **1 John 5:13** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may

know that you have *eternal life*.

- **John 5:24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has *eternal life*. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
- **John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have *eternal life*.
- **Ephesians 1:13-14** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were *sealed with the promised Holy Spirit*, who is the *guarantee of our inheritance* until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Back again to our question, can a believer's name be blotted out from the Book of Life? The short answer is NO!

Ok, what about the verses that seem to suggest that our names can be blotted out (i.e., Exodus 32:31-33; Psalm 69:27-28; Revelation 3:1-5)?

Respected Biblical teachers and scholars¹ suggest that every person's name starts out in the Book of Life and are only 'blotted out' when a person rejects Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. God writes everyone's name in the Book of Life when they are conceived or born in the hopes that they will

embrace salvation, and only blots people's names out of the book if they definitely reject salvation. When is that point of no return reached? Only the Lord knows. The Bible says, "The Lord knows who are His." The argument goes that this position explains why infants who die and the mentally handicapped are able to enter heaven; they have not attained the capacity for accountability; therefore, their names have not been removed.

In other words, you keep your name from being removed by trusting Christ as your Savior and Lord!

However, some other Scriptures seem to suggest that names may be *written into* rather than *blotted out* of the Book of Life.

Revelation 17:8-9 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come."

This particular passage seems to suggest that not everyone's name is written in from the start.

Revelation 20:15 "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Whether you hold to the position that all names are in the Book of

¹ For instance, Gary Hamrick, Senior Pastor of Cornerstone Chapel in Leesburg

Virginia and Dr. Christopher R. Smith, consulting editor to the International Bible

Society (now Biblica) for The Books of the Bible, an edition of the NIV).

Life and only blotted out when with a final rejection of Christ or you believe that our names are written in to the Book of Life at the instant we receive Jesus as Savior and Lord, Scripture regarding 'blotting out' in no way suggests that a believer can lose their salvation and their name blotted out from the Book of Life. Even if we agree with the position that all person's names start out in the Book of Life at conception (or birth) and are only removed or 'blotted out' when they definitively reject Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, the associated passages have nothing to do losing your salvation.

As one Bible scholar (Dr. Christopher R. Smith) states, "If we have genuinely trusted in Jesus, we never have to wonder whether He knows that and will honor it. As He said to the people of Sardis, 'I will acknowledge that name before my Father and His angels.'"

Rest assured; your eternal security is intact. Jesus assures us in John 10:28-30, ***"I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."***

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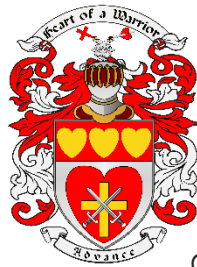
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If you would like to contact me directly, email me at Greg@HeartofaWarrior.org



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