

God's Library

The Bible is the Word of God and is His most prominent book. It – and it *alone* – contains God's specific revelation to mankind. Despite what you may have been told, the Bible is complete, authoritative, and infallible. As 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us, the Bible contains everything that is needed in order to make “the man of God...perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Cults often claim that the Bible isn't enough and that God wrote other books to fill in the gap, but that is not true. The Bible is God's one and only book of revelation.

However, that doesn't mean that the Bible is the only book that God has written. Heaven contains a few other books that have been created by Him. Since this topic doesn't get discussed very often I thought it might be worthwhile to take a moment to explore the other volumes that can be found in God's heavenly library.

The Book of Life

Other than the Bible itself, this is by far the most famous book in God's library. As I said earlier, this book will be used in the Great White Throne judgment, which takes place after the Second Coming, after the Millennial Kingdom, and after the final defeat of Satan. At that time all of the dead are brought before the Lord and judged:

Revelation 20:12: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

A great many things have been said about this judgment over the years, and unfortunately there are a number of misconceptions about it. First of all, it's very important to note that all of the people who are at this judgment *are dead*. Verse 12 actually emphasizes this point twice: it says that “the dead” are the ones who stand before God and “the dead” are the ones who were judged “out of those things which were written in the books.” In both cases the people who are being judged are dead. In the entire passage the living are not mentioned even once. I often hear commentators say that all of mankind will be present at this judgment, but that is not the case: as you can see, the only ones who are judged during this event *are the dead*.

The reason this is important is because the righteous are resurrected long before this judgment ever takes place. The Church is resurrected at the Rapture, and the Old Testament and Tribulation saints are resurrected at the Second Coming (which takes place some years after the Rapture). Therefore, the only people who will still be dead when this judgment occurs are the lost and whoever dies during the Millennial Kingdom. If the only people who die during the Millennial Kingdom are the lost, then that would mean that *only the lost will be at this judgment*.

Getting back to the topic at hand – as you can see, there are actually a number of different books that are used in this judgment. The one I want to focus on here is the Book of Life, which is the deciding factor. All those whose names are missing from the Book will be cast into the Lake of Fire, where they will be tormented day and night, forever and ever:

Revelation 20:15: “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

As you can see, having your name written in the Book of Life is tremendously important. Jesus Himself emphasized this point:

Luke 10:20: “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”

If your name is written in the Book of Life then you will be spared from the wrath of God. It rescues you from eternal torment in the Lake of Fire and gives you eternal life. It even grants you access to New Jerusalem:

Revelation 21:27: “And there shall in no wise enter into [the city] any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

In other words, having your name written there is an astounding blessing! All those whose names are written there will live with God, in His city, forever and ever. They will never again know suffering, crying, or pain, but will live in everlasting joy and peace. If you are saved, your name is written there and will never be erased:

Revelation 3:5: “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

As we can see, all those who “overcome” have their name written in the Book of Life. I John tells us that those who overcome are those who have put their faith in Jesus:

I John 5:4: “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.
5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”

So, then, all those who believe in Jesus have overcome the world and have their names written in the Book of Life. Their name will never be blotted out, they will not be cast into the Lake of Fire, and they will be allowed to enter New Jerusalem.

People usually assume that our names are written in the Book of Life the moment we are saved, but that is not the case. The Bible tells us that our names were written in the Book of Life when God created the world:

Revelation 17:8: “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

This verse tells us of another advantage to having our names written in the Book of Life: those whose names are found there will not be led astray by the antichrist during the Tribulation. The rest of

the world will wonder and be deceived, but those whose names are written will understand. They – and they alone – will be spared. In fact, all those whose names are written in the Book of Life will be delivered:

Daniel 12:1: “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

As we can see, the Bible has a lot to say about the Book of Life. However, there are several other heavenly books mentioned as well. For example...

The Book of Tears

This book is easy to miss. As far as I have seen, it is only mentioned in one verse. You can find it in this psalm of David:

Psalms 56:8: “Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?”

What David seems to be saying is that God has a book that records all of our sorrows and tears. This is very different from the Book of Life, which is a simple register of names. The Book of Tears does not list names; instead it lists sorrows. In other words, God doesn't just care about our sufferings; He actually *writes them all down*.

Why does this matter? Well, think of it this way. We know that God cares about our problems, but this caring can sometimes seem very abstract. After all, even though God cares for us we still have to suffer and we still have to endure terrible trials. Sometimes it almost seems like God is saying “Yes, I know this trial hurts, but it's good for you so just grit your teeth and bear it.” God's compassion isn't always something that we can actually *see*. Our relationship with God is founded on faith: we believe in Someone we've never actually seen and we believe that He loves us even when our lives are going terribly wrong and the pain seems endless.

What we see here is that God really *does* care. He doesn't just care in a vague “I feel your pain” kind of way; He cares enough to actually write it all down. God never forgets anything, but He still records all of our tears so that the record will be there for all of Heaven to see, for all the rest of time. Our suffering matters to Him and He is not indifferent about it.

The Book of Remembrance

This book seems to be mentioned in several different passages. The first one can be found in the last book of the Old Testament:

Malachi 3:14: “Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”

It would be easy to confuse this book with the Book of Life, but I think they are two separate books. Although the Book of Life was written when God created the world, this book was written only after people started complaining to God (verse 16). Since this book is newer than the Book of Life, it must be separate from it.

The reason God created this book was because people were upset that the wicked were living prosperous lives while the righteous were suffering and being abused. They didn't think that life was fair. “It is vain to serve God”, they grumbled. “What's the point of serving the Lord if all it does is ruin your life?”

Because of these complaints the Lord had a book of remembrance written so that people could “discern between the righteous and the wicked.” This book was written specifically for “them that feared the Lord.” God wanted to make it clear that He *did* draw a distinction between those who belonged to Him and those who did not. It may have looked like the wicked were getting away with murder while the righteous were life's big losers, but that was just an illusion. God was aware of the righteous acts of His saints and He commissioned a book to record those acts.

It's quite likely that the Book of Remembrance is one of the unnamed books that are mentioned at the Great White Throne judgment:

Revelation 20:12: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

Daniel 7:9: “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.”

Notice how it says that the dead were judged according to their works, based on what the *books* had to say – meaning that there were more books there than just the Book of Life. Verse 12 seems to say that the books contained an account of each person's works. The Book of Life doesn't have that information, but the Book of Remembrance is a good candidate for this.

It's easy to fall into the same trap that the Israelites did and start thinking that obeying God isn't important. Some Christians today have noticed that the wicked appear to be having a great time and have decided to copy their pagan lifestyle. “After all,” they reason, “I'm saved and going to Heaven. Who cares how I live my life? It's not like it matters! Trying to obey God is just asking for trouble. Suffering is for suckers.”

However, the fact is that it *does* matter. God cares tremendously about whether His children are faithfully serving Him, and He disciplines those who are not. He also offers rewards for obedience and sacrifice. On top of everything else, God actually records our acts of service. In other words, God is recording our tears *and* our sacrifices. He is aware of our acts of service and He writes them all down in a permanent record. The things that we do are not forgotten; they are recorded in the Book of Remembrance.

The Book of Body Parts

The last book is definitely the strangest, and unfortunately very little is known about it. It is mentioned in this psalm of David:

Psalm 139:13: “For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

I call this one the “book of body parts” because that seems to be exactly what it is: a book that lists body parts. Now, I don't know if this book covers everyone who has ever lived or if it's restricted to those whose names are written in the Book of Life; the passage doesn't say. But verse 16 is clear that it *does* list body parts, and the list is apparently made before each person is even conceived. (It's quite possible that, like the Book of Life, this book was written when God created the world.)

I do not know the purpose of this book. In the surrounding verses David is praising God for the fact that he was “fearfully and wonderfully made” and marvels that his body parts were all written down before he even had any body parts. I'm sure that there is some significant truth here, but nothing jumps out at me. It's easy to understand the purpose of the Book of Life, the Book of Tears, and the Book of Remembrance, but this book just seems odd. I have no doubt that there is a reason for it (after all, *everything* God does has a reason behind it), but at this time I can offer no theories.

Conclusion

It's interesting to note that the Bible actually mentions quite a few books that are not included in the Bible itself. For example, there is the Book of Jasher:

Joshua 10:13: “And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.”

There's the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel:

1 Kings 15:31: “Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?”

The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah:

1 Kings 14:29: “Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?”

The Book of the Wars of the Lord:

Numbers 21:14: “Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the LORD, What he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon,”

The Book of the Acts of Solomon:

1 Kings 11:41: “And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?”

The Book of Jehu:

2 Chronicles 20:34: “Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.”

The Book of the Decree of Esther:

Esther 9:32: “And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.”

All of these books have been lost. They were earthly books, written by men, and God chose not to preserve them. While this is a loss of historical knowledge, it is not fatal. After all, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 makes it clear that the Bible contains *everything* we need. Although the lost books would have been interesting to read, the Bible has no gaps. It is a finished work.

At the same time, the Bible mentions other books that are *not* lost because they are heavenly books. We've already taken a look at the Book of Life, the Book of Tears, the Book of Remembrance, and the rather odd Book of Body Parts. One other book that bears mentioning is this one:

Psalms 69:28: “Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.”

This one may well be poetry; after all, “blotted out of the book of the living” sounds like a poetic way of saying “let them die.” But what if it's not? If it *is* a real book then it's almost certainly not the same thing as the Book of Life. The reason I say this is because asking God to blot someone's name out of the Book of Life is the same thing as saying “Lord, please send that person straight to Hell. Make sure they can never, ever be saved no matter what.” I *really* don't think that's a prayer that God

wants us to be praying. If the Book of the Living is a real book and not just a poetic metaphor then I think it's a separate book entirely – one that apparently lists everyone who is currently alive.

When thinking about the Book of Life, don't forget about the other heavenly books that God has revealed to us. The Lord cares about your tears and He remembers your righteous acts. He is not a vague, distant God that can't be bothered with our problems; He is an ever-present help in trouble, and He truly does care for us.