

THE BOOK OF LIFE

Introduction

Christ sent out seventy disciples (beyond the twelve) on a witnessing mission (Luke 10:1-2), preaching *“The kingdom of God is at hand”* (vss 9, 11). They were to prepare the way for Christ’s follow-up visits. He warned that there would be challenges but promised the *“harvest”* would be great.

- They later returned with excitement at the power that had been given to them!
- Jesus, however, redirected their thinking heavenward, where their authority originated:
*“Do not rejoice that the evil spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names **are written in heaven**”* (Luke 10:20 – NIV); *“recorded in heaven”* (NASB).

A unique celestial record is kept, a registry of people, that Jesus said was important and praiseworthy.¹

- Moses referred to that record as *“Your [God’s] book, which you have written”* (Exodus 32:32). Elsewhere, it is called the *“book of life”* (Psalm 69:28, Philippians 4:3) and even the *“book of life of the Lamb”* (Revelation 13:8).
- From Luke’s account, it is a **“document”** worthy of notice, even definitive to man’s future.

That dramatic notation by Moses suggests the **sacredness** of that record. When the worship of a golden calf by the Israelites occurred at Mount Sinai, mention of that *“book”* came into the Biblical record for the first time. Those individuals had been recently delivered from slavery. Those *“divinely chosen people”* only a few weeks before had experienced the dramatic display of God’s power in their *“escape”* from Egypt.

- Then, because of Moses’ forty-day delay up that mountain, Aaron acquiesced to making a golden calf idol for this people!
- God told Moses: *“Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation”* (Exodus 32:10).

When Moses came down from the mountain, the immediate penalty was the death of 3000 people, who were killed at Moses’ command by God’s instructions. The next day Moses, again, went up into Mount Sinai and addressed God, saying:

- *“Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, **blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written**”* (Exodus 32:31b-32).

¹ Marshall, I. Howard, *The Gospel of Luke* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand Rapids, MI – 1978), p. 430.

- God replied with a crucial judicial principle: “Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book” (Exodus 32:33).

Moses was cognizant of a special “book” that scholars have identified as the “Book of Life.” This detail, that a name can be blotted out of that record book, introduces an important dimension to this registry.

- Since God was ready to wipe Israel off the map, but “repented” because of Moses’ amazing intercessory plea, one concludes that being deleted from its registry would mean death.²
- Christians must clearly strive to be retained in that book. Might that mean that all names are already in that book before it is reviewed?

Expositor White captured the sentiment of that time: “Moses realized how dreadful would be the fate of the sinner; yet if the people of Israel were to be rejected by the Lord, he desired his name to be blotted out with theirs; he could not endure to see the judgments of God fall upon those who had been so graciously delivered. The intercession of Moses in behalf of Israel illustrates the mediation of Christ for sinful men. But the Lord did not permit Moses to bear, as did Christ, the guilt of the transgressor. ‘Whosoever hath sinned against Me,’ He said, ‘him will I blot out of My book.’”³

- Wonderful is God’s mercy.
- Wonderful was the love and care Moses had for the people that were in bondage and slavery for over three centuries.
- But fearful is the stroke of God’s justice.

The Registry – Whose Names?

At a time of great stress, David pled with God to save him from his pursuing enemies who were seeking to destroy him (Psalm 69:1-4). His were urgent prayers for God’s help and deliverance (vss 5-21). Then, with what is called “holy zeal,” he summoned God’s judgment on the wicked:

- He prayed that their names be removed from “*the book of life*.”⁴
- “*May they be blotted out of the book of life*” (Psalm 69:28 – NASB).

This informative text suggests, associated with the narrative in Exodus, once again, that all names were initially in that book, all names were destined to be recipients of God’s saving grace, but that wickedness can lead to their judicial removal. Other messages are filled with instructive metaphors regarding that final separation of the wicked from the righteous.

² Arnesen, Tory; *Thesis: The Letter to Sardis and Eternal Security*, Liberty University School of Divinity, p. 28.

³ White, Ellen G.; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 326.

⁴ Van Gemeren, William A.; *Psalms, The Expositor’s Commentary*. In Gaebelin, Frank E., general editor, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11 (Zondervan; Grand Rapids, MI 49530; 1991), pp. 459-460.

- “And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy – everyone who is **recorded among the living in Jerusalem**” (Isaiah 4:3 – NKJ).
- Many scholars allude to this Old Testament record as a symbol for the “Book of Life,” listing a final group of saints who are “left.”
- David wanted that divine record to be so pure and holy; he pled that the wicked names not be written by the side of the righteous (Psalm 69:29b).⁵

God’s wrath is unveiled in numerous “stories” within Revelation. A segment of humanity will be destroyed – but not without a divine warning, accompanied by the invitation to repent. Were all those individuals initially in that heavenly registry? Evidence supports that they were. This will be further addressed shortly.

The **final edition** of the Book of Life is a “list” of those who are citizens of God’s kingdom. When the last name of an apostate Christian or evil individual is removed, one must conclude that the remaining collective “list” will be sealed for eternity (Revelation 7:3-4). They will be “redeemed from the earth” from “among men” as “firstfruits unto God” (Revelation 14:4).

- Wonderful will be the declaration that “*they are without fault*” (Revelation 14:5).
- The **Book of Life was edited**. The remaining individuals, called “the remnant” (Revelation 12:17) are covered with Christ’s righteousness. They are seen in the courts of heaven as without a flaw (Revelation 14:5).

This group is also described as the Church of Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13). They are sealed on their foreheads with (1) the name of God, (2) the name of the city of God (New Jerusalem) and (3) Christ’s new name, which still remains a mystery (vs 12). Speaking of that time, the prophet Malachi said:

- “Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. **A scroll of remembrance** was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name. ‘On the day when I act,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not’” (Malachi 3:16-18 – NIV).
- Is this the same book as the Book of Life? Many records of **human deeds** are designated as “books” (Daniel 7:10, Revelation 20:12) or “book” (Psalm 56:8). Malachi is the only passage where the specific name is given, the “Book of Remembrance” (Malachi 3:16).⁶

Since the ultimate objective is to have a record of redeemed saints, the weight of evidence suggests that these two books are the same.⁷ “It rests further upon other Old Testament

⁵ Keil, C. F. and F. Delitzsch; *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 2006), vol. 5, p. 469.

⁶ Rodriguez, Angel; *JATS*, “The Heavenly Books of Life and of Human Deeds, pp. 20-21.

⁷ <https://www.biblicaltraining.org/library/book-remembrance>

thoughts that the names and actions of the righteous are written in a book before God (cf. Ps. 56:9, Dan. 7:10).... The Lord will spare them in the judgment as a father spares his son who serves him. The expression *to spare* may be explained from the contrast to the punishment of the ungodly.”⁸

Many scholars, again, believe that the Book of Life contains the names of all who ever lived on the earth, and that only those with unrepented sins are blotted out of it (J. Kuhlewein, *TLOT*, 2:813; H. Haag, “*TDOT*, 7:380).”^{9,10}

The importance of the “**final edition**” of the “Book of Life” is underscored by Daniel.

- “*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**” (Daniel 12:1 – KJV).*
- **Following** that time of great tribulation or trouble will be significant signs in the sky related to the sun, moon and stars; **then** Jesus returns (Matthew 24:29-30, Revelation 6:12-16). All decisions for eternity will then be irrevocable.

“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (Isaiah 25:9).

That last narrative in Daniel’s prophecies deserves “particular treatment.” “The whole book of Daniel points toward it; perhaps it contains the most important message of the prophet.”¹¹

- Michael, the Son of God, transitions from sitting as a Judge to standing as a Deliverer for “*thy people*” – Daniel’s people.

Daniel’s people were addressed in Daniel 9:24: “**Seventy weeks were decreed for thy people.**” Here, they will be defended by Him with “deliverance.” Contextually, from the horrors of the antichrist outlined in the previous chapter. **Daniel’s people are now described:**

- “**All those found written in the book**” – the “*book of life*”
- This “deliverance” is not only at the end of time but at the end of the Great Tribulation.¹² It is noted to be “*at that time*,” related to the final era of the King of the North (Daniel 11:36-45).¹³ It is when probation ends and Christ’s Second Coming is pending.¹⁴

⁸ Keil, C. F. and F. Delitzsch; *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts 01961-3473; 2006 – 2nd printing), vol. 10, p. 661.

⁹ As quoted in Rodriguez, *ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁰ Arneser, Tory, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

¹¹ Doukhan, Jacques B.; *Daniel* (Andrews University Press, Southerland House, Berrien Springs, MI 49104-1700; 1987), p. 99.

¹² Miller, Stephen R.; *The New American Commentary, Daniel*, vol. 18 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 315.

¹³ Goldingay, John E.; *Daniel – Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 30 (Word Books, Publisher – Dallas, TX), p. 306.

¹⁴ Ford, Desmond; *Daniel* (Southern Publishing Association, 1978), p. 281.

That Book in John's Apocalypse

The New Testament suggests that only those who are citizens of God's kingdom are found in the Book of Life. A legitimate question, however, is again raised: "Isn't that imagery only after all the names of the wicked have been removed?" This must be analyzed because it molds the spiritual message associated with that book.

Christ told John that those individuals in the Sardis Church who overcome "... *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*" (Revelation 3:5). The blessings there are threefold:

1. Clothed in white garments, which were washed "*in the blood of the Lamb*" (Revelation 7:14). These are seen as the bridal garb in the wedding of the Lamb (19:8).¹⁵
2. Their names won't be erased from the "*book of life.*" This serves as a warning to those who fail to value and profit from the atonement on Calvary, leading to repentance!
"Blotting out" or "erasure" of a name is a metaphor for destruction or death (Exodus 32:32-33, Psalm 69: 27-28, Isaiah 4:3).¹⁶ This is a conditional matter left to the choice of each church "member."¹⁷
3. That individual will be confessed before God the Father and the angels. This suggests that they will have been adopted and, now, are being introduced to their heavenly family!

An insightful comment by Paul: "*But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven*" (Hebrews 12:22-23a – NIV).

- Those who are declared "*firstborn*" on Mount Zion appear to be the 144,000 (Revelation 14:4), or firstfruits, and all those saved, who are noted in that book.
- The Greek wording means "inscribed permanently" in that record.¹⁸

That "final kingdom of saints" is a further focus by John: "*Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but **only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life***" (Revelation 21:27 – NIV).

There is a personal response to God's invitation to salvation.

- "*Shameful*" is translated elsewhere as an abomination. It is a unique focus given to us by Christ (Matthew 24:15) and characterized more deeply in Daniel 8, 11-12 and

¹⁵ Beale, Gregory K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan – 1999), pp. 280-281.

¹⁶ Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 81.

¹⁷ Aune, David E.; *52C World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 1–5* (World Books; Dallas, Texas), 1997, p. 223.

¹⁸ Allen, David; *The New American Commentary – Hebrews* (Hebrews 1:2) (B&H Publishing Group; Nashville, TN), p. 592.

Ezekiel 8. This issue directly relates to the harlot of Revelation 17:4, who represents rebellion against God's covenant, law and authority.

- The “*earth beast*” **false** prophet (Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:10) is characterized by falsehood and deceit.¹⁹

These characteristics are a fascinating but sad summary of Satan's agents, who will be excluded from the Book of Life.

This Book of Life is a record of the elect saints who, at the end, are holy in God's sight. They are identified as those who “benefited” from the Lamb's redemptive sacrifice. Therefore, that registry can be called the “Lamb's Book of Life.”

- This verse is especially given to warn people “in the present” that there is an eternal outcome to their choices and actions.²⁰
- This advances the important concept of human accountability:

“Throughout the parable of the sower, Christ represents the different results of the sowing as depending upon the soil. In every case the sower and the seed are the same. Thus He teaches that if the word of God fails of accomplishing its work in our hearts and lives, the reason is to be found in ourselves. But the result is not beyond our control. True, we cannot change ourselves; but the power of choice is ours, and it rests with us to determine what we will become. The wayside, the stony-ground, the thorny-ground hearers need not remain such. The Spirit of God is ever seeking to break the spell of infatuation that holds men absorbed in worldly things, and to awaken a desire for the imperishable treasure. It is by resisting the Spirit that men become inattentive to or neglectful of God's word. They are themselves responsible for the hardness of heart that prevents the good seed from taking root, and for the evil growths that check its development.”²¹

This solemnly means: “*Blessed are they that do his commandments, **that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city***” (Revelation 22:14).

Verses that Beg for Understanding

“The plan of redemption was developed in eternity past. It “was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of ‘the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.’ Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne.... God did not ordain that sin should exist, but **He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency**. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, ‘that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16.”²²

¹⁹ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 765.

²⁰ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 1102.

²¹ White, Ellen G.; *A Call to Stand Apart*, p. 23.

²² White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 22.

*“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. **He was chosen before the creation of the world**, but was revealed in these last times for your sake” (I Peter 1:18-20 – NIV).*

“God knew the complete program of redemption before the foundation of the world. The revelation of this program is for the benefit of those who through the hearing of the gospel would put their faith in God and enter into the living hope (1:3)....

“The result ... to those who respond in faith to the gospel, is to direct their faith and hope to God, specifically to the God who is the Father of Jesus Christ (1:3), **by whose foreknowledge this great plan of redemption was conceived and accomplished** (1:2, 18-21).”²³

In light of that foreordained rescue mission, even before the foundation of the world, comes this challenging verse:

*“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are **not written** in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8 – KJV).*

Some translations change the whole meaning: *“All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain” (Revelation 13:8 – NASB).*

Many scholars have weighed deeply into the purpose of this verse. The NIV, along with the KJV, reflect the redemptive foreknowledge given in Peter, noted above.

- *“All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast – all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world” (Revelation 13:8 – NIV).*
- The principled metaphor that Christ was slain at or before the Creation of the world is firmly seen in Scripture. It was an anticipatory event to give courage to fallen mankind. But – would God avoid recording the names of individuals that He would later die to save?

The concept that names can be blotted out of that book suggests that everyone who has ever been born on planet earth has a divine opportunity of being saved. And – we have this important thought:

- *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance**” (II Peter 3:9 – KJV).*
- Christ’s death embraced the whole world with His saving grace. The names missing must be of those who failed to become friends with the Lamb and were removed.

Here is a deeper issue:

²³ Jobes, Karen H.; *1 Peter* (Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, Michigan), p. 119.

If the names were blotted out before Creation or were never entered in that book, it would raise the question of predestination or an election before man even had a chance to choose or even was born. Everyone was chosen before Creation. Christ died for each person. The evil choice of those noted in 13:8 is of their worshiping the Sea Beast and Satan. **That is what is here being addressed.** Would God willingly avoid recording a select end-time, wicked group from the time of Creation?

- “Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book” (Exodus 32:33). They had been recorded – but could be erased.
- Personal rebellion against God risks the elimination of one’s name. That **principle** was given to Moses on Sinai.
- John noted: “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**” (Revelation 3:5).

“All who would have their names **retained** in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet **He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth.** Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.”²⁴

It was God who “predestined his Son” to die on the Cross and be resurrected²⁵; then He elected that everyone would have a chance to accept by faith that sacrifice!

Because of the Lamb’s death for all, the simplest explanation is that the names of all earth’s inhabitants were originally in the book.²⁶ Jesus spoke of His kingdom which was prepared from the Creation of the world (Matthew 25:34).²⁷

- That kingdom anticipated all those for whom Christ died.
- However, at the end it contains only a remnant who are left after the “removal” or “blotting out” process is completed. That is the result of a divine judicial review or judgment. The focus of Revelation 13:8 is on those who honor the antichrist and the devil himself! It is symbolic, as though they had rejected the Savior from the foundation of the world when the rescue plan was set and didn’t want their names in that book!

A similar verse is later presented with even deeper concern regarding predestination.

²⁴ White, Ellen G.; *Councils for the Church*, p. 348-349.

²⁵ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 504.

²⁶ Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 8–22 – An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1995), p. 65.

²⁷ Mounce, Robert H.; *The Book of Revelation* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1977), Berry, Marian; *Revelation Workbook*, (CHJ Publishing, Middleton, ID), p. 252.

*“The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names **have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world** will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come”* (Revelation 17:8 – NIV).

The wording strongly suggests a divine “fate” pronounced on those associated with the end-time antichrist before they were born! These wicked earth dwellers’ names **seem** to be “*kept from the Book of Life from earth’s beginning.*” Is this the same issue as is in Revelation 13:8? What is the meaning of this seemingly more predeterminative verse?

Scholars often evade or circumvent this issue. Examples:

1. Just how these “facts work alongside of human responsibility is a mystery”²⁸
No explanation is given; it is sidestepped.
2. Many simply state, without addressing the issues, that this illustrates the sovereignty and omniscience of God.²⁹ He can do whatever He wants.
3. Does this mean that Christ dies for someone He knows will be lost? Some try to gloss this issue.

“The implication appears to be that only the names of the servants of God have been written in that book from the foundation of the world. Obviously the text describes divine foreknowledge – God knows in advance the names of those who will respond positively to the work of the Spirit in their lives and has written their names in the book – but not predestination in the sense of an **arbitrary decision** fixing the eternal destiny of every human being. The language of divine foreknowledge serves to emphasize the assurance of salvation. Within the arena of history, the inclusion of names in the book of life is based on the event of the cross (Rev 13:8) and appears to take place when the individual surrenders his or her life to the Lord. This is suggested by the fact that the name of a righteous person could be removed from the divine ledger because of unfaithfulness and sin. That awful possibility excludes the idea of predestination, as defined above.”³⁰ But the Creation timing record is problematic.

In Revelation 17:8 it appears that people have never had their names in the Book of Life, which contrasts sharply with those whom the Lord has an intimate relationship with in His book. (Psalms 56:8, 87:6, 139:14 depict this intimate relationship.)

Does this mean that the anticipated salvic work of Christ would not apply to these “destined to be lost”? How cruel to let them be born and then face an “eternal fire”!

John Piper has these encouraging words: “God’s love is inclusive: ‘In 1 Timothy 2:1-4 Paul says that the reason we should pray for kings and all in high positions is that this may bring about a quiet and peaceable life which ‘is good, and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **who wills (thelei) all persons to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth.’ In 2 Peter 3:8-9 the apostle says that the delay of the second coming of Christ is

²⁸ Arnesen, Tory; *op. cit.*, p. 43.

²⁹ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 616.

³⁰ Rodriguez, Angel M.; *The Heavenly Books of Life and of Human Deeds*, p. 14.

owing to the fact that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day. 'The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, **not willing** (*boulomenos*) **that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.**' And in Ezekiel 18:23 and 32 the Lord speaks about his heart for the perishing: 'Do I indeed delight in the death of the wicked, says the Lord GOD, and not rather in his turning from his way that he might live? ... **I do not delight** (*ehephoz*) **in the death of the one who dies**, says the Lord; so turn and live' (cf. 33:11)."³¹

If the wicked were prejudged before the Creation of the world, why is there a judgment where books are opened, followed by the destructive burning of evil (Daniel 7:9-11). Are Christians the only ones who are blotted out of the Book if they rebel? Contextually, this group is related to the fourth consecutive beast (7:7-8). Are they handled under a different divine standard? Is there more than one judgment of destiny?

This verse has led some scholars to strangely conclude that:

1. "You don't believe in Jesus in order to have your name written in the book. You believe in Jesus **because** your name has already been written down in the book."³²
2. You don't reject Jesus in order to have your name blotted out, but you reject Jesus **because** your name is not there.

There, however, are deep questions regarding the wording of this verse.

The English translation by H. T. Anderson (1861) of the Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century A.D. – Greek translation of the Bible), includes the traditional KJV wording of Revelation 17:8. Yet, there are serious concerns raised regarding the accuracy of this man's nineteenth century translation.³³

In addition, many older English translations put the phrase or part of the phrase "*whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world*" in brackets (e.g., older Orthodox Jewish Bibles, Douay–Rheims Catholic Bible, Tyndale Bible, Wycliffe Bible). This suggests that the phrase may not have been in the earlier manuscripts or is under serious question as to its wording.

Able Baker analyzed the nuances of Revelation 17:8. His thinking added to the growing number of scholars massaging its possible meanings.³⁴ "I came to the conclusion that John is essentially saying that if one is not written in the book of life, which was written before the creation of the world, then one will not personally obtain the **predestined inheritance** mentioned.... in the context of Ephesians 1:4-12." Then Christ did not need to die for them?!

Here are, perhaps, the most helpful thoughts to the purposed meaning of Revelation 17:8:

³¹ Piper, John; *Are There Two Wills in God? Divine Election and God's Desire for All to be Saved*, p. 1.

³² Storms, Sam; *10 Things You Need to Know About the "Lamb's Book of Life,"* samstorms.com, pp. 2-3.

³³ <http://www.purebibleforum.com/showthread.php?150-the-Codex-Sinaiticus-Project-quot-English-translation-quot-deception>

³⁴ Baker, Able; *Revelation 17:8 Part Two: A Response*, thinktheology.org.

1. God foreordained that all could be saved – receive that inheritance – be retained in that book.
2. God foreordained that all those who rebel and fail to connect with Jesus Christ will be lost – erased from that book.

A judicial process, first noted in Daniel 7:9-10, appears to make the final determination of man's destiny.

Perhaps the simplest approach to this verse with its seemingly confounding thoughts is:

*Since the plan of redemption was foreordained before the Creation of the world, a rhetorical message seems to be given that rejection of Christ's saving blood is **as though** they were blotted out before Creation.*

Conclusion

Why does God need records when He is all knowing? The primary function is judiciary. They preserve evidence for the divine tribunal when one's eternal destiny is determined.³⁵ From the courtroom scene in Daniel 7, a dramatic picture is given when the "Ancient of Days" in a legal setting has "thousand thousands" ministering to Him and "ten thousand times ten thousand standing before Him." Then it says that the "judgment was set" and the "books were opened."

- This is an eschatological judgment.
- A similar scene, but in a different era, is in Revelation 20:12.
- A fascinating study is one where God is actually "creating" a book in Revelation 4 and 5 that is sealed and later opened by Lamb Jesus. It is opened after Christ's Second Coming in time for Revelation 20:12.

The names recorded in the Book of Life suggest that all are destined for eternal life. But a judicial phase of name removal or blotting out is shown. God has said that He will wipe away our **sins**, for his sake, and won't remember them any more (Nehemiah 13:14, Psalm 109:14). But, unless one is an overcomer, the **name** is wiped away from that book (Revelation 3:5).

"If any of these by stubborn persistence in sin become finally hardened against His Holy Spirit, their names will in the judgment be blotted from the book of life."³⁶

This is so important. "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.... And whosoever **was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire**" (Revelation 20:12, 15). That Book holds the key as to what happens to an individual in eternity.

For the saints whose names are retained in that book:

³⁵ Rodriguez, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

³⁶ White, Ellen G.; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 326.

“The spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb’s book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon’s roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter’s devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. And the remnant are not only pardoned and accepted, but honored. ‘A fair miter’ is set upon their heads. They are to be as kings and priests unto God. While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father’s name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. ‘These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.’”³⁷

The *living* saints whose names are retained are the 144,000. They are the ones “delivered” from the great tribulation of Daniel 12:1. Is your name written there? His “proofing” of the “list” won’t take much longer.

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³⁷ White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 475-476.