

Two Books of Revelation Revisited III
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
June 7, 2003

On 11.25.95, I gave a sermon about the two books of Revelation. Most of you never heard it.

A few weeks ago, some comments by my sister reminded me of that sermon so I thought we might take a look at the contents of that sermon again – in a study format so we can look at it in more detail.

Our starting point was Revelation 20.

Revelation 20:

- 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

Notice there are two separate and apparently very distinct “books”. One is a set of multiple books and the other is a singularly focused book.

We started to study to find out:

- What are those books?
- What is their content?
- What does this verse tell us?

It appears the set of books – the plural reference – refers to the Bible – more specifically – the Book of the Law. Last week we reviewed the following references that lead to that conclusion:

The Book of the Covenant and the Book of the Law

- Ex 24:1-8
 - Book of the Covenant
- Deuteronomy 28
 - 1-14 Blessings on Obedience
 - 15-68 Curses on Disobedience
 - Book of the Law
- Deuteronomy 29
 - Verse 29 tells us that God keeps some things secret but we are to do according to what He reveals to us.
- Deuteronomy 30
 - Moses tells us that those who turn away can come back to obedience
 - 11-20 Moses tells us the choice is ours!!!!
- Deuteronomy 31

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- De 31:26 "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you;
- The Book of the Law will be “a witness against” us – it will be the yardstick for measuring our performance!!!!
- Joshua
 - God commissions Joshua with the way to success
 - Jos 1:8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.
- 2 Kings 22
 - Hilkiah finds the Book of the Law and takes it to Josiah
- 2 Kings 23
 - Josiah restores true worship of God
- 2 Chronicles 34-35
 - Relates the same story as 2 Kings 22

Last week, we started with Nehemiah

- Nehemiah 8
 - After rebuilding the temple, Nehemiah reads the law
 - **There was understanding at this time!**
- Isaiah 29.9-24
 - The book is sealed – it cannot be understood – until “that day”
 - Isa 29:18 In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.
- Ezekiel 2.8-3.21
 - Ezekiel is set up as the watchman
- Daniel 7.9-10
 - Daniel is given a vision of God
 - Da 7:10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.
- Daniel is given understanding and is then told to seal the book – it is not to be understood again until the end time.

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Notice that Daniel is told to shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Revelation 20 tells us that the books were opened. In this context, it appears to me that we are talking about the meaning of the books – not the content.

- Revelation 10
 - **Remember the blessings and cursing – the sweet and the bitter. The “eating” of the book describes taking its contents into the person’s whole being – a complete understanding.**
- Revelation 22

This week we will look at the “other book” – the “Book of Life”.

Revelation 20:

- 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

Remember – it is Good News!!!!!!

The Book of Life

God predestined a plan for each and every one of us.

- Romans 8.18-30
 - Ro 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.
 - Ro 8:30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.
- Ephesians 1.1-14
 - Eph 1:5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
 - Eph 1:11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

Predestination relates to a plan – in this case, God’s plan. He has laid forth a plan for each and every one of us before we were born. The outcome of that plan depends upon the choices we make.

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

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Could Jeremiah have decided to NOT follow God's plan and become a prophet. I believe the answer is "yes". However, if Jeremiah had made a different choice, we would have been reading the same words from the prophet "George".

Lu 19:40 But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

How closely does God follow the events of our lives? David knew.

Psalm 139

- 1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me.
- 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.
- 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways.
- 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.
- 5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.
- 7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?
- 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
- 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
- 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.
- 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me;
- 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.
- 13 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.
- 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.
- 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
- 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.
- 17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!
- 18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.
- 19 Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.

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- 20 For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain.
- 21 Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?
- 22 I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.
- 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;
- 24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

God created us and knows us better than we know ourselves. He knew our weaknesses before we were born – and He knew what opportunities we would have before we were born!

If it is true, as Peter said:

- 2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

... Then it is safe to assume that every one of us is written into God's Book of Life before we are born.

Since Revelation 20 makes it clear there are some NOT in the Book of Life, then how does one get removed?

- Ex 32:32 "Yet now, if You will forgive their sin-but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."
- Ex 32:33 And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book."

Moses assumes his name has been written in the Book of Life – AND it can be removed!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Let's look at what the Bible says about the Book of Life.

- Ps 40:7 Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me.
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- Ps 56:8 You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?
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- Ps 69:28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.
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- Ps 139:16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.
- Da 12:1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.
- Mal 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.
- Php 4:3 And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.
- Heb 10:7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come--In the volume of the book it is written of Me--To do Your will, O God.'
- Re 1:11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."
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- Re 3:5 "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
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- Re 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
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- Re 17:8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.
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- Re 21:27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

From these verses, and the study we have just completed, I assume:

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1. The “books” of Revelation 20 are the Books of the Law of Moses – the Books of the Covenant
2. The “another book” is the Book of Life.
3. Everyone’s name is written in the Book of Life before their birth.
4. One’s name can be removed from the Book of Life
 - a. By choice
 - b. By making bad choices – remember the blessings and cursings?
5. At the resurrection, each person’s life and its detailed accounts will be measured against the Book of the Law
 - a. Since no one is allowed to know everything (according to Ecclesiastes), then we will be judged according to what we have been allowed to know.
 - b. We will then be taught what we did not understand – “the books will be opened”.
 - c. What was said in secret will be made public – what was in our hearts will govern how we are judged since God looks on the heart and not the outward appearance. He knows what we know and what has been hidden from us.

We will be judged according to how we have judged others.

- Mt 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.
- Lu 6:37 "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Each one of us will be held accountable for our own actions.

Ezekiel 18 – it is not God’s ways that are unfair – it is our own.

- 29 "Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, is it not My ways which are fair, and your ways which are not fair?"
- 30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.
- 31 "Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?"
- 32 "For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!"

Rewards:

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- Mt 5:12 "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- Mt 5:46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?"
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- Matthew 6
 - Mt 6:1 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.
 - Mt 6:2 "Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.
 - Mt 6:4 "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.
 - Mt 6:5 "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.
 - Mt 6:6 "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.
 - Mt 6:16 "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.
 - Mt 6:18 "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.
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- Mt 10:41 "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.
- Mt 10:42 "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."
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- Mt 16:27 "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.
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- Mr 9:41 "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.
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- Lu 6:23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.
- Lu 6:35 "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.
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- Lu 23:41 "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."
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- 1Co 3:8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.
- 1Co 3:14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.
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- 1Co 9:17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.
- 1Co 9:18 What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.
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- Col 2:18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,
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- Col 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.
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- Heb 2:2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,
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- Heb 10:35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.
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- Heb 11:26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.
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- 2Jo 1:8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.
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- Re 11:18 The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

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- Re 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

De 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Ec 12:14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

Eze 28:3 (Behold, you are wiser than Daniel! There is no secret that can be hidden from you!

Mt 6:4 "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

Mt 6:6 "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Mt 6:18 "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Mr 4:22 "For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.

Lu 8:17 "For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light.