

How Are Names Blotted Out of the Book of Life?

by Tony Warren



One of the more perplexing questions that is frequently asked among Christians is, "if the reformed doctrine of Perseverance of the saints is correct, how are names blotted out of the Book of Life,?" In other words, if salvation is eternal, and the book represents a log of Christians who have eternal life, then how are some blotted out of the book of life? A friend of mine recently put it this way:

"I have a question that is very puzzling to me. If Predestination is true (which I believe that it is), and the Book of Life has those written in it who are saved from the foundation of the world. Why do the Scriptures say that there will be those whose names are blotted out of this book. For those of us who believe in eternal security, how is this possible?"

First, for Reformed Christians the book is "obviously" not a log of Christians who have eternal life, else no one listed could be blotted out of that book. Depending upon what tradition one comes from (*generally*), there are two ways this question is generally answered in Biblical circles.

(1a.) In this scenario, the Book of Life is seen from the perspective of everyone having their names written there from the beginning of creation. It is theorized that because the plan of God was for eternal life to be for all people, that when the wicked rebel in life, they ultimately have their names blotted out. If a person never calls upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, the theory is that this person's name will be blotted out of the Book of Life. This first scenario is probably the majority view.

(1b.) Another version of this scenario is that the "Lamb's Book of Life" differs from The "Book of Life."

(2.) In scenario number two, the Book of Life is revealed from the perspective of being a representation of God's Covenant church. That is to say, from the standpoint that it is a symbolic listing or register of the whole Covenant congregation. It is all inclusive, meaning all who are of the visible Covenant church. Just as all Old Covenant Israel were not all the true Israel of God (Romans 9:6), but were all the visible Covenant congregation. The visible or corporate Israel was "merely" a

symbolic representation of the indivisible eternal Israel of God. I hold to this second view of what is the Book of Life.

The first question to answer is, "*what is the nature of the Book of Life?*" The Biblical answer is that it is a symbolic book listing God's Covenant people. It is not an actual or physical book that one might sit at a desk and write in. Rather it is a figurative expression depicting God's Covenanted people. In other words, it is a spiritual pictorial "representing" inclusion, or all the Covenanted children of God. Thus all those within the Covenant family are included in the book whether they are truly saved or not. This is not a novel idea as this is in the exact same way that the nation of Israel was the Covenanted ([Genesis 17:13](#); [Romans 9:3-4](#)) children of God (*corporately*), and yet they were not all *true children of God* in the redeemed sense as the remnant were. Likewise, in the external or visible New Covenant congregation today, not all true children of God. Nevertheless, they are all part of the Covenant house of God, just as Israel was. God alone Knew which ones were truly elect and sealed with His Spirit.

2nd Timothy 2:19-20

- "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.
- But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour."

How are names blotted out of the Book of Life? Well, all of the building blocks of the house of God are not true believers. And yet they are still part of the community and building of that house. There are those who are spiritually wood and earth and will have their true nature revealed at the appropriate time, but they are still part of the Covenant house. We may not be able to know for sure who are His, but the Lord sees and knows all. Likewise, the Lord (*being omniscient*) knows that all those that are written in the book (representing the children of life) are not truly children of life. Only those He has sealed with His Spirit are. Yet they are all Covenanted, sanctified, set apart for the service of God by representing Christ on earth. Nevertheless, they are no more eternally part of the Book of Life than the wood and earth construction of the Lord's house ([2nd Timothy 2:19-20](#)) was eternally part of His body. It is the same analogy that God uses in the Old Testament in declaring that some of Israel will be "*cut off*" from their God. That didn't mean that they were once in communion with God as saved children and then were cut off from that salvation. Rather, it illustrated the very same principle of Covenant breaking as their names being taken from the book. In other words, that they were Covenantally part of the visible register of Israel, but will be removed because they were never "eternally" redeemed in the true Israel (*Christ*) of God. They will be blotted out or cut off from being Covenant children. We can see a practical example of this in how God warned those who were sanctified or set apart for the service of God in the Old Testament.

Numbers 9:13

- "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him."

The same principle of being blotted out of the book for transgressions because one was not washed in the spiritual water of separation. This symbolizes they weren't truly spiritually cleansed. When someone is blotted out of the book, it is the same principle as saying he would be cut off from Israel. Because the people of Israel were the official register of God's people in the external Covenanted sense. Thus blotting out their name is the same as removing them from that body or cutting them off from the congregation ([Exodus 12:19](#)). It is a symbolic severing of the wicked from among the true children of God, because they didn't belong among God's Covenanted people.

Genesis 17:14

- "And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; *he hath broken my Covenant.*"

To be cut off from the Children of God and be separated from the Covenant of God, is the same principle as being blotted out from the Book of Life. The Book of Life is a metaphor or figurative expression for God's Covenant registry. In other words, just as the the nation Israel was a register of those under the Covenant (*representing life*), the book is a symbolic scroll, a record of all the members of the Covenant community of God. Thus, whosoever is part of the Covenant community (congregation), has their name symbolically written in the Book of Life.

Many Christians erroneously believe that everyone who was ever written in the Book of Life is saved, thus the question "*how are names blotted out of the Book of Life?*" But this is not the case. Since from God's Word we know that names obviously can be blotted out of the Book of Life, and that some names were never in the Book of Life, it is clear that this represents the Covenant congregation. God's Word also clearly illustrates that salvation is eternal and cannot be lost, thus we are brought to the conclusion that the book cannot possibly be exclusive to God's elect. This being the case, the only other Biblical, rational and logical conclusion is that it is a list of all the congregation that represents the Kingdom of life. Which would follow since the Bible plainly teaches that every person that is brought into the Covenant Kingdom, is not truly saved.

1st Corinthians 3:11-13

- "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;
- Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

The external Covenant congregation has those professed Christians in it *representing* life, calling themselves of Christ, that will be removed and cast out at the last day. The reason will be because they were not truly the work or building of Christ, they only professed they were. In reality, He never knew them ([Matthew 7:22-23](#)). This is the fundamental rule that is illustrated in how names are blotted out of the Book of Life. It is a figurative expression illustrative of someone in the Covenant community that doesn't belong there.

I have discussed several views with many Christians, and some hold that it makes more sense that the names of all mankind were in the book from creation. In other words, that every man woman and child ever born into life was in the Book of Life. Then those who loved darkness more than light were blotted out where they do not become Christians. However, a careful study of this view reveals it doesn't actually sense at all. God's Word tells us very clearly that there are those that have *never had their names written in the Book of Life*. Therefore, all of mankind could not have had their names written there. e.g.:

Revelation 13:8

- "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."

Clearly, many people are not, and were not ever written there. All the multitudes of people that dwell upon the earth and are outside of God's Covenant church, these are those whose names were *never written in the Book of Life*. This of course is because they were *never* part of God's Covenant body or congregation. Thus, they were not listed in this Covenant Registration. People who profess to be of God's covenant family place their names in that registry. The Unsaved are names that will be blotted out. Predestination is something that was decreed before the foundation of the world, and so this decree must take place. God looked at two children within the Covenant community of Israel and declared, "*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*" -[Romans 9:13-15](#), and this was a declaration of foreknowledge, predestination and revelation that He knew before they were even born that Esau would be blotted out of the book, having not been written there from the foundation of the world. If we were written in the Book from the foundation of the world, we are as Jacob washed clean in the blood of Christ, we cannot be removed because of sin because there is no condemnation for those in Christ. But if we were as Esau, not truly elect and washed clean in Christ, then obviously we can and will be blotted out of this Covenant body because we don't belong there and are without Root.

Actually, I do not think that this principle should really be so difficult for some to understand because the truth that people can pervert God's Covenant relationship and be cut off from Him corporately, is well documented within the Bible, and also vividly illustrated in the Old Testament.

Exodus 32:32--33

- "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of

thy book which thou hast written.

- And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."

It is not the Moses or the elect who can be blotted out of the book, it is the sinful and disobedient of the congregation who have not the Spirit and who have broken God's Covenant with Him that will be blotted out. The wicked people of Old Covenant Israel (*the Old Testament church*) could have their names blotted out of God's book because they were the external Covenant congregation of God. Like the local church today, they were corporate "representatives" officially registered as children of God.

Deuteronomy 9:12-14

- "And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image.
- Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:
- Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they."

While God doesn't use the word for scroll or book here, it is clear that this blotting out is the removal of the names of the Children of Israel from the Kingdom of Heaven registry. Blotting their names out from under heaven symbolizes they will be removed from being children of the Kingdom of Heaven. In other words, they would be cut off from among God's people. God gave example after example of this same cutting off all throughout Scripture. The Children of Israel having their names written in heaven signified their Covenant position with God. As God blotting out their name from under heaven signified their removal from that position. The heathen around Israel had never had their names written in that book of Kingdom registry. It was reserved for Israel, the congregation of God. It is the same with those outside of God's Church or Covenant congregation today. They are not Covenant children, and so their names were never written in the Book. The Book "symbolizes" registration as part of the Covenant family of God.

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."

Here again, God is showing us the juxtaposition of the "true believers" who were chosen and written in the Book from the foundation of the world, and the rest of the world. Note these particular people who wonder or are mesmerized by this likeness of a beast are not those in the book, but all whose names were not written in the Book of Life *from the foundation of the world*. These are not just those written corporately by

church membership, but the election only. Those written or decreed by the hand of God from before the world was created, they are those who don't wonder or admire the likeness of the Beast. And that is a very important distinguishing characteristic between them, and those who are registered afterward and "can" have their names blotted out. These elect written from the foundation of the world cannot have their names blotted out. It's like God choosing our names in His pre-determination, versus man for his own purposes choosing to add his name to the registry. God's work of Predestination and inclusion, which is by Grace alone, versus man's own vain effort to become a child of God.

So there are really three groups. Those who are not called (*the non-church*), those called (*the visible church*), and those both called and chosen (*the indivisible church*). Only the latter has the promise of never being blotted out of God's Covenant registry. The fact that those who truly overcome in Christ cannot be blotted out, and were written in the Book from the foundation of the world, is in itself a testimony to perseverance of the saints and eternal security.

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."

The fact that God says He will not blot out of the book the names of those who overcome, implies He will blot out the names of those who do not overcome in Christ. The verb overcome is the Greek word [*nikao*], and means to prevail over, or to conquer. The only way to prevail or be victorious over the wicked one is to do so in Christ. It is only in our Saviour that we are more than conquerors. This is actually declaring that those who are truly saved (*the eternal decree of divine election from the foundation of the world*) cannot have their names blotted out, while those who have not truly overcome or gotten the victory in Christ, will be blotted out. Which again proves the point of the external Covenant Congregation relationship, versus the eternally written relationship.

Revelation 22:19

- "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Obviously those adding to God's prophecy were never saved, since they twist Scripture attempting to put words in God's mouth. They corporately had part in the Book of Life by confessing to be of Christ and His Covenanted church. The Old Covenant is conditional so that no one can keep it perfectly, which is required ([James 2:10](#)). The New Covenant is unconditional because it is by grace, established in Christ's blood and built upon better Promises. When God says we must be obedient and He will reward us, it is the very same Promise or Covenant that can only be kept in Christ. When God says obey or I will judge you, it's the very same conditional warnings that God told the Old Covenant church. The difference is in Christ, there is

now no condemnation of the law ([Romans 8:1-2](#)) because of His meritorious act. One the law of God will judge and the other in Christ they were already judged. God is the same today, yesterday and forever. There is no change in the process of God's law, His salvation by Grace or of His exhorting the congregation to obedience. There is the eternal body who obey through the faithfulness of Christ, and there is the external body who remain under condemnation even though they take the name of Christ. Just as there is blind faith, and then there is the saving faith of Christ. The latter is evidenced by the saint's fruits and obedience. The fact is, nothing has changed for God's people from Exodus to 1st Peter.

Exodus 19:5-6

- "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:
- And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."

1st Peter 2:9

- "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"

This is the continual Covenanted relationship of God illustrated in Biblical Theology. As was illustrated with Old Covenant Israel, this is reiterated to God's people in the New Testament dispensation. In the Covenants we see a spiritual portrait of the doctrines of works versus grace. The reason that the elect can never be blotted out of the Book of Life, is because they are not there of their own merit (*or by continuing merit*) or their own free will. They are there by the finished work of Christ, which is why they were written from the foundation of the world. How then could they logically or positionally be blotted out if God put them there from eternity, except the Lord were not omniscient? The fact is, our Lord is "both" the author and finisher of our faith. Thus we cannot rationally fall, because we were selected long ago to conform to His image.

Ephesians 1:4-5

- "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
- Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"

We were predestinated unto the adoption, that we are sons or Children of God that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. So from the Scriptures we should know without ambiguity the following things.

1. There are Covenant children in the Book of Life, written there from the foundation of the world by God.

2. There are Covenant children who are written in the Book of Life, but not from the foundation of the world, and they have no eternal security because they can be blotted out.
3. There are people outside the Covenant who were never written in the Book of Life at all.

If one can be blotted out of the Book of Life because of their sins, then obviously that person was never saved from "all their sins" in the first place. For God is omniscient and immutable, and he doesn't save someone from the foundation of the world from their sins, only to lose them ([John 6:39](#)) because of sin that He didn't pay for. He doesn't pay for someone's sins in vain, where He has to then un-pay for them. That is not possible, so He never paid for the sins of those blotted out.

This all inclusive Covenant children motif goes hand in hand with Covenant Theology. Yet many Christians (*even those claiming to understand Covenant Theology*) do not really comprehend this principle of the visible or corporate congregation model. This is what is really at the heart of the controversy. If we don't really understand that there are Biblically two groups within any church (*true believers and those merely professing belief*), and yet that group still represents the Covenant of life, then we can't really understand how some within the group can be blotted out of it. The fact is, if we profess to be part of the body of Christ, we profess inclusion in His Book of Life. Nevertheless, if we are called and yet not truly regenerated in Spirit, we shall be blotted out of that Book as easily as many of Israel were.

Matthew 22:14

- "For many are called, but few are chosen."

How are names blotted out of the Book of Life? Unfortunately, many Christians have a very hard time grasping the external or corporate "Covenanted People" concept. This is in no way to claim that everyone should without difficulty understand (*blotting out from the Book of Life*), but once we claim to understand the Covenanted people principle, we should be able to grasp how there are the visible Children of God (*Sons of God, Covenant People*), but that doesn't mean that they are all truly saved and cannot be cut off. Which is the same principle of God blotting out names from the Book.

Matthew 21:42-43

- "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"
- Therefore say I unto you, ***The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.***

How could the Kingdom of God be taken from many of the nation Israel (*representing the Children of God*), and then that representation given to the New Covenant church? If no true Children of God can lose their salvation (*and they can't*),

then how was it possible that God's people Israel (*in part*) could be cut off? The answer is that it is possible because Israel was the external Covenant representation, not the true Israel of God, which were but a remnant of people within that Covenant body. Israel in part was cut off from the kingdom, but not the apostles and disciples who were the Israel of God.

Romans 9:6-8

- "Not as though the Word of God hath taken none effect. ***For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:***
- Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.
- That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

For though the corporate body Israel was the visible "representation" of the Kingdom of God, the true kingdom was but a remnant of the people who dwelled within. Thus the kingdom representation could be taken from them that they no longer represented the Covenanted children of God. They could be blotted out of the Book of the Living not because eternal security was flawed and they somehow lost their salvation, but because most were never the "true" Children of God in the first place. Even though they were prescribed as God's Covenanted people, most were never saved. As an analogy, it would be like saying someone is a "*false Christian*." In reality we know that all Christians are by definition followers of Christ and elect from the foundation of the world. Nevertheless, God also makes the distinction between us and those professing Christians who are not saved, but whom He allows to remain in His Covenanted Congregation until the time of judgment. There is therefore no contradiction with believers and unbelievers being in the same Covenanted house of God.

2nd Timothy 2:20

- "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, ***but also of wood and of earth;*** and some to honour, and ***some to dishonour.***"

1st Corinthians 3:11-13

- "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, ***wood, hay, stubble;***
- Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

Therefore, when God says all those of Israel are not Israel, it may seem like a contradiction, until we "recognize" the two (external and eternal) Covenanted relationships of God's people to Him. Only then can we understand how there is one Israel that is not God's elect from the foundation of the world, and one Israel that is. Two Israelis, yet truly only one true "*Israel of God*." Some in that great house are a

lasting building of Gold, Silver and Precious stones, and some of the same building are wood, hay and stubble. Both corporately part of that house but only one of the true building of the Lord. Thus one can and will be removed, or blotted out from God's Covenant registry.

Psalms 69:25-28

- "Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.
- For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.
- Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness.
- ***Let them be blotted out of the book of the living,*** and not be written with the righteous."

This is a Messianic Psalm speaking of the registry of God's people. The notation is that their habitation would be made desolate and they will be blotted out of the book of the living (*Book of Life*) that they not be written with the righteous. In other words, that they be cut off from among God's Covenanted people registry because they are found to be rebellious. They do not belong written with those made righteous through the blood of Christ. There are some that believe this psalm proves that Christian's salvation may be lost. However, in order for this idea to be a real proof that salvation may be lost, it has to first be shown that these people were saved in the first place, and that cannot be done. Moreover, the very idea that this Book of Life has only the names of the righteous written, "*and yet some unrighteous are blotted out,*" is nonsensical. For if only the righteous (*saved*) are written, how then could the unrighteous be there to be blotted out from among the righteous? It makes no sense! On the contrary, it is actually proof from Scripture that the symbolism of the Book as the Covenant body registry is true. That this book represents a list including both saved and unsaved, righteous and unrighteous, as all those who are visibly connected with being God's people. Indeed, look at what Christ says to His congregational body at Sardis.

Revelation 3:3-5

- "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.
- Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.
- ***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."

Again, to overcome is to gain the victory, to conquer or prevail, and this can only be done in Christ Jesus ([John 16:33](#); [1st John 2:12-14](#)). He that overcomes in Christ will never have his name blotted out, because he is truly born of the Spirit of God and not merely a visible part of the Covenant church. This is what some in Sardis lacked and thus could have their names blotted out.

1st John 4:4

- "***Ye are of God***, little children, ***and have overcome*** them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Overcoming in Christ is the difference between having Christ in you, and merely taking His name while merely having a form of Godliness. Without having overcome, we are like a white washed wall that temporarily hides our filthiness rather than abolishes it. It is a visible representation that isn't worthy of what it represents.

Another good example to help us understand this principle of the Covenant people model is found right in the context of Matthew chapter 22. There we find a perfect example of the corporate Covenant people of God being cut off or removed from that status. It's the very same visible Covenant principle that we see symbolized by the Book. Here it illustrates Israel "represented" by original people who are invited guests of the King, yet they are ultimately removed because they were unworthy to be there. In other words, they were called but they were not chosen. They were corporately bidden or invited, but they never were predestinated to being the New Covenanted creation from above.

Matthew 22:2-14

- "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,
- And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.
- Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.
- But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:
- And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.
- But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.
- Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but ***they which were bidden were not worthy.***
- Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.
- So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.
- And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:
- And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.
- Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away,

and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- For many are called, but few are chosen."

Many of the King's Kingdom were originally called or bidden to the wedding, but what happened? They lacked the commitment, reverence and fear of God that characterizes true Spirit filled believers. As a result, most were judged of God and few of Old Covenant Israel were actually saved. Clearly, though they were part of the external Covenant people representation, they were cut off from that Covenant because they weren't chosen. And even after, we see one who came to the wedding of the Son without a wedding garment (*without being clothed in the righteousness of Christ where he was truly saved*) and he was cast out because of it. That again is this external Covenant Kingdom principle. It is the congregational relationship where they were called, but were not truly chosen or saved. They were children of the Covenant, it pertained to them, but they were external or visible children only and were not worthy in Christ.

Romans 9:3-4

- "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:
- ***Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the Covenants,*** and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;"

The Covenant pertained to them as another example of the corporate relationship to God of the children of Israel. The Jewish people were the Covenanted people of God, and yet God judged them (in part) that many died in unbelief.

One might argue or protest, "*but how can one be in the book signifying life and not be saved?*" I would reply that it is in the very same way that the Word of God says one can be part of the Covenant, be Israel, be the Children of God, be the sons of God, etc., and yet never be saved at all. They were only sons or children of Israel corporately, but were not the family through a Christ relationship. They represented Christ, who is the true Israel of God, but they were no more true children than their animal sacrifices were true atonements. It was merely an outward representation of the true.

Exodus 32:32-33

- "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.
- And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."

Moses couldn't be blotted out of the Book because his name was inked there in Christ's blood from the foundation of the world. In God's eyes, he is free of sin. God will blot out those children who are written there corporately, but who are in rebellion against Him and not truly saved. There is a difference. The question is not the Book, but when those in the Book had their names written. Was it from the foundation of the

world in the blood of Christ, or was it merely by being corporate Covenant people set aside or sanctified for the service of God? The ones that will be blotted out are those names that were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, and thus their names are there unworthily or illegitimately. In other words, Christ didn't establish them as Christians, they established themselves without the work of Christ on their behalf.

There are some theologians who object to this view by charging that the "Book of Life," and the "Lamb's Book of Life" are two different books. However, there is no Biblical evidence to support such a distinction. Is the Lamb's Book of Life not the Book of Life? Adding the possessive word "Lamb" to the phrase "Book of Life" simply further identifies its owner, it doesn't change the Book. In fact, that a Book of God's people is of life itself implies the Lamb. For He is the Resurrection and the Life. In other words, who does the Lamb's Book of Life belong to and how does one remain written therein? The answer is that it belongs to the Lamb, symbolically illustrating that it is a book pertaining to the salvation of God's people. And there is salvation through none other. Likewise, who owns the Book of Life? It is owned by Christ also, and by the qualifier "of Life," it also represents the names of those to whom the Covenant of salvation pertains. There is no legitimate distinction to be made concerning the two. Blotting out of the Book of Life, or the Lamb's Book of Life simply represents those in a congregational Covenant relationship with God, being cut off from God. By contrast, those with their names written from the foundation of the world represent the truly saved of that Covenant registry. These are those saints under the eternal Covenant, which reaches from Abel to those who are saved today. In the Old Covenant side, they lived looking forward to the prophesied work of Christ. And in the New Covenant side, we live looking backward to the finished work of Christ. Even as illustrated in such passages as Acts 3.

Acts 3:24-26

- "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.
- Ye are the *children of the prophets, and of the Covenant* which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.
- Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

The same with our Covenant children today receiving the sign of that Covenant relationship through Baptism. They are clearly all brought corporately into this Covenant congregation, but are only under the redemptive blood of Christ "if" they are among those elect from the foundation of the world.

1st Peter 3:21

- "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:"

There is one Baptism or cleansing and it is spiritual, and yet God also speaks of water baptism, which merely represents that one true Baptism. In this same way we can look at this Book of Life as a figure of speech illustrating a "*Family Record*" within the context of the Covenant relationship that God has established with His people. i.e. everyone who claims to be part of the family of God are symbolically recorded as family. As such, they are partaking of the Holy Spirit ([Hebrews 6:4-6](#)) among the elect in the congregations. Yes, they may be somewhat enlightened by tasting of this heavenly gift, but they have not truly eaten of Christ to truly become a new creation. So as part of the congregation they receive many benefits of being of the church, but not the inheritance. In other words, they are definitely part of this external Covenant relationship with the body, but only in a superficial way. We can see this principle in the example of 1st Corinthians 7 illustrated in God's explanation of unbelievers being made holy or sanctified (*set apart for the service of God*) just by being "part of the Covenant family." In other words, just by being the unbelieving husband of a believing wife, you are externally *sanctified* for the service of God (under the Covenant relationship) that your children are not unholy.

1st Corinthians 7:13-14

- "And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.
- For the unbelieving husband is Sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."

In this passage the external Covenant church relationship is illustrated clearly, where simply because an unbelieving husband (or wife) is married to a believing spouse, they are sanctified. They are part of that holy Covenant family of God relationship and set apart or sanctified in the eyes of God for the sake of the children. Yet we see that they are still not saved. So when one asks, what does names blotted out of the Book of Life mean, the answer is that it means, like Israel, branches can be broken off the Covenant tree of Israel. For the visible Covenant relationship with God does not equal salvation anymore than being circumcised or baptized does. Clearly this passage of Corinthians confirms that some people may be included among the sanctified ranks of the congregation, even though they ultimately perish (e.g. [Hebrews 10:26-31](#)). That is how people are included visibly and sanctified in the Covenant, but can be blotted out of the Book as unsaved.

Indeed, since the external Covenants with Israel always included both saved and unsaved, it stands to reason that all who are included in today's visible Covenant congregation would also be included in the Book. There are many examples in Scripture that illustrate this external Covenant congregation principle. We saw 1st Corinthians 7:14 of the Covenant sanctification of the unsaved, we read of Covenant baptism of children, whether saved or not, and it is also illustrated in Romans chapter 11 as God warns the Gentiles against pride. They too could be cut off of the Olive tree representing Covenanted Israel.

Romans 11:20-21

- "Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:
- For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed lest he also spare not thee.*"

This truth of the wild olive branches also being able to be cut off from Covenant Israel (*symbolized by the olive tree*) can only be because (*as with the original branches*) all those in the Covenanted tree are not truly redeemed or saved. Yet they are all instituted and acknowledged by God as part of His Covenanted people Israel. We can find many such examples of the visible Covenant representation.

Romans 2:28-29

- "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:
- But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

In other words, there is the physical or external Jew (*of Judea*), and then there is the "true" Jew who is born of the Lion of the tribe of Judea. When God spoke to Israel, He spoke to them all corporately, even though only a remnant were spiritually Israel. So there are visible Children of God, and then there are eternal indivisible Children of God through the Seed. There is Israel, and then there is the everlasting Israel of God. There are Jews, and then there are the true Jews according to God's definition. Likewise, there are those written in the Book, and then there are those who are indelibly written in the Book.

Of course, one might logically ask, "*how can you agree that the Book of Life refers to the eternal decree of divine election, and yet believe some can be blotted out of it?*" I do so because of the way the Holy Scriptures are written. They are written with a view to the true, but also with a view to the group **representing** the true. It always has been written that way. The Book of Life does represent to the eternal decree of divine election, but so does the title "Israel of God" or "Children of God." Yet there is a eternal Israel and an external Israel that represents it. That is why God declared, "*For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel - Romans 9:6.*" Did that mean that Israel does not refer to the people of eternal decree of divine election? Absolutely not. What it means is that from the Biblical perspective, there is a Covenanted body or congregation "representing" this true Israel. This doesn't negate that there is an eternal decree of divine election, which covers the true Israel of God. There is no contradiction there, it is in complete historical agreement. Just as there is one church, which is the true body of Christ, but there is also the visible or external Covenant church representing the body of Christ. It's all the very same principle. There are those written in the Book of Life from an eternal redemptive church relationship position, and those written in the Book of Life from a visible external Covenant church position. God's eternal decrees of election are immutable, so blotting out of the Book is not symbolizing a loss of life, but rather a removal of all those Christ never knew, who were there but unworthy to be representing Him.

Conclusion How are names blotted out of the Book of Life? From the Scriptural view of a Covenanted perspective, the Book is a figure of a registry of the names of all Covenanted members of God's congregation. That means both those who claim new life, and those that are truly born from above. Some can be blotted out because the Book does not represent only the truly saved. It represents God's Covenanted people collectively.

So when the question is asked, "*How can names be blotted out of the Book of Life?*" We understand that it is because this Book represents the Covenanted children register. It is not a register of only those who are truly saved, nor a register of all mankind. As Old Covenant Israel could have those not truly saved within its ranks, so the Covenanted church today can have those in it who are not truly saved within its ranks. Even as God warned the messenger of the church in Sardis that it had a name that it lived, but was dead. Meaning they claimed registry in the book of life, but were dead. That name they claimed was Christ, and except they truly overcome in Him, they will be cut off from among God's people.

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 Sardis was warned, so the Covenant church today is warned to make their calling and election sure ([2nd Peter 1:9-11](#)). Let us take note and take heed to the warnings of the Word of God, because those who don't learn the lessons of biblical history, are destined to repeat the errors. Therefore, "*brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.*"

May the gracious Lord, who is rich in compassion and mercy, grant us divine wisdom and spiritual understanding, that He guide us into truth through a circumspect study and exegesis of His most Holy Word.

Amen!

Peace,

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