

In which Book is your Name Written?

By

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Man has a Maker

It's a thought that has engaged the mind of every serious person who has ever walked this planet:

What is man?
Where does he come from?
What am I doing on earth?
Is there any meaning to my life?
How will it all pan out?
Does God truly exist?

Call it the riddles of life, and you will not be far wrong. There's more to man than meets the eye. We feel it in our innermost being. The longing in our souls betray it--the quest for meaning, for purpose; our fascination with the paranormal; the desire to make sense of human existence. We wish to understand them all but we never really get to understand. Whole philosophies have evolved simply out of the quest to unravel the whys and wherefores of human existence, but the search has continued throughout history to date. The human soul remains insatiable. It appears man cannot satiate his own soul. Solomon, a wise man who spent the better part of his life trying to unlock the true meaning of life but to no avail (Eccl. 1:12-18; 2), knows the answer--there's God and He has put "eternity" in man's heart:

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end (Eccl. 3:11 *ESV*).

The Almighty has put into man's heart a perpetual longing to understand--a longing to understand His ways and works, and the meaning of his own existence and life, but man never gets to get all the answers. Because man is not of himself. Man is the handiwork of God. The key to the satisfaction of man's soul is, therefore, not in his hands but in the hands of His maker. He alone knows the true desire of the soul. It's to yearn for Him and to do His will. Addressing the council of Greek philosophers at the Areopagus, the apostle Paul disclosed that this was the real purpose of human life:

Acts 17:26-31

²⁶ And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

²⁷ That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us:

²⁸ For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring.

²⁹ Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

³⁰ And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

³¹ Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.

He put into our genes a natural inclination and desire to seek Him but now He commands us to stop sinning and turn to Him, not only because it feels right and it is right to do so, but especially because He has appointed a day of judgment on which He will judge all mankind by His Son Jesus whom He raised from the dead as the undeniable proof of the judgment committed to Him.

It's perfectly within the right of God to judge mankind because He made from "one blood" (Adam) "all nations of men" and fixed the boundaries of their habitation. Moreover, He gave them a mandate not to live for themselves but to seek Him, and that mandate is allied to man's innermost natural feelings. The desire for God is a universal quest which if pursued will lead one to God. He has not made Himself unknowable. He's closer to us in our thoughts. His morality is etched in our conscience. And we bear the stamp of His likeness even in our fallen state.

All this shows man is a proper candidate for divine judgment. God knows the stuff man is made of. Man has a divine element in him; he is capable of rational thought and behaviour and, indeed, of doing the will of God (see Rom. 12:2). Man is not entitled to live his life any way he wants without morality, without justice and without the fear of God. In fact, his whole duty on earth is to devote himself to the will of God. We read in Eccl 12:13-14:

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

¹⁴ For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Have you ever pondered that? Your whole duty as a human being is to know your Maker and to do His will. That is His will for your life and your purpose in life. You miss this purpose for your life, and your whole life is meaningless. Here's Solomon again speaking at the end of his tortuous search for the meaning of life.

The will of God is the reason why He created us so He might share His perfection with us. Although He created us as free moral agents with a will of our own, we are not free to live without responsibility or regard for His values. He gave us life and being and therefore has the right to demand that we live to please Him. We are accountable to Him. And account we will give, for "He shall bring very work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil".

Greater Grace, Greater Responsibility

The Lord mooted the principle in Luke 12:48: "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required". And Paul expounded on the principle in relation to God's abundant grace in Jesus in his Epistle to the Romans:

Rom 5:20-6:2

²⁰ Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

²¹ That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

^{6:1} What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

^{6:2} God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

The Law highlighted man's [legal] guilt all the more (Rom. 3:19), "for where there is no law there's no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). Yet this increased sinfulness was the very grounds for more grace which God gave in Jesus. Yet not to perpetuate the status quo but to reorder the situation. Sin no longer reigns unto death. Instead, it's grace on the throne and it reigns not through sin or lawlessness but THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ!

Sin has been dethroned. It belongs to our past. It's no longer adored, no longer entertained and no longer recognized as even alive. We cannot for a second contemplate doing its bidding. It's therefore a mistake to dabble in it as a means of making grace abound after having turned over our lives to Christ. GRACE only abounds to achieve one result and one result only---THAT IT MIGHT REIGN IN OUR LIVES THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST!

Indeed, it's inconceivable to think and work sin when Grace is (supposedly) reigning in our lives through righteousness. The reign of grace in our life—evidenced by deeds of righteousness—reigns so thoroughly in us, permeating every part of our being, that there's no room for sin in our life; no part of us recognizes sin as alive in us in any way to obey it. Our whole being is practically dead to sin and serve it in no shape or form. What we serve is the king on the throne - Grace reigning through righteousness!

Greater grace has led to greater responsibility to live right; it has brought about righteousness where sin once abounded. And it has enabled us to cut loose from all the entanglements of sin.

The gospel of grace does not excuse vile behaviour but teaches responsibility to live right before God. We read in Titus 2:11-14:

Titus 2:11-14

¹¹ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

¹³ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

¹⁴ Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

There's no way we can exempt ourselves from divine judgment on the basis that God has no business asking us to give account of ourselves. Not on moral grounds - our conscience is ever a shrill reminder of our guilt or innocence. And neither by the supposed liberties of grace. The freedom grace grants us is freedom from sin into righteousness (Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:16). Calvary's impact on our lives is seen in our blameless life, a life that has witnessed the redemptive power of Christ to save from all lawless deeds so we will be His special people, brimming with enthusiasm for good works. We are not turned off by God's law but by lawlessness. We take no delight whatsoever in lawlessness. We are dead to sin!

Grace has brought heavenly change to our lives; it has begotten us anew into the righteous nature of God. On judgment day, we can face Him with confidence:

1 John 2:28-29

²⁸ And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

²⁹ If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him.

**Great White Throne Judgment:
"And the books were opened..."**

Whether or not we avail ourselves of God's grace or not, let it be settled in our minds that man is under obligation to worship, serve and please his Maker. How well or poorly we handle this obligation is subject to divine judgment. All mankind is set to appear before the judgment seat of Christ to account for his time on earth -whether or not he sought God and how that informed his actions (2 Cor. 5:10). No secret sin will be hidden that day (Rom. 2:16); no deed will be passed over, unrewarded or unpunished. Even speech will be examined in judgment and a sentence passed accordingly (Matt. 12:36-37).

Security will not be found in falsehood and chicanery; wealth and riches will be powerless to defend that day. All sinners will be in big trouble:

Isa 28:15-18

¹⁵ Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

¹⁶ Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

¹⁷ Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

¹⁸ And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it

Isa 5:14

Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

Zeph 1:14-18

¹⁴ The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

¹⁵ That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,

¹⁶ A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.

¹⁷ And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.

¹⁸ Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy: for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

Isa 33:14

The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

It's regrettable, but "the sinners in Zion" (God's true church) got into the 'wrong book'. Not that they suffered a miscarriage of justice or are not guilty as charged. Sinners they are! But why counted as part of Zion?

Zion is not supposed to harbour sinners, but God knows not all those who claim to be of Zion are really the children of Zion.

"The sinners in Zion" are the hypocrites in Zion. They wilfully ignored and mocked at the law of God entrusted to and taught in Zion (Isa. 2:2-3). And when judgment happened, they were seized with panic, for they have been taught about all the fearsome consequences of transgressing God's law (Isa. 66:24). They never became true saints committed to keeping the

commandments of God (Rev. 12:17). They simply warmed the pews in Zion Sabbath after Sabbath and did their own thing. On the day judgment, they realized their folly and their predicament.

No cloak, no camouflage will deceive God. He watches and records every deed in His books. The records are not entered in a single book but in two books. One book contains the records and deeds of all mankind - good or bad (see Ps 139:16). This book may be looked upon as representing God's memory of all the deeds of humanity, and that memory cannot be a pleasant one. "For all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, any judgment based on that book is a judgment to condemnation. It pronounces no one righteous and therefore to be rewarded with eternal life.

No one will be saved then?

The saved have their entry in what we might call 'the book of condemnation' *counterbalanced* by another entry in a different book; thus effectively cancelling out the sentence of death imposed for sin (see Rom. 8:1-2 & John 5:24). This book is called "the book of life"; it contains the names of all the saved ones of God. Unless your name is written in this book, you are destined for the second death in the lake of fire. We read in Rev. 20:11-15:

¹¹ And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

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

¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

¹⁴ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (see also Dan. 7:9-10).

God, the Judge of all, knew their names were not in the book of life but double-checked to demonstrate His justice. God will deal fairly with all men; "the judgment of God is according to truth" (Rom. 2:2).

While the first book presumes all are guilty before a holy God, God by His grace have the names of His called out ones in "the book of life" because they responded to His call to faith and repentance, and He freely justified them and equipped them to live lives of righteousness. They lived the life of saints to the end; their former sins were no longer held against them—God refused to remember any more:

Rev 12:17

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Heb 10:16-17

¹⁶ This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

¹⁷ And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

Don't be mistaken. Man will answer to God for his deeds and misdeeds. And He will make no mistake in judgment; there will be no miscarriage of justice. He will never forget to reward the righteous with eternal life nor will He forget to punish the wicked. The names of the saints are written in the book of life in heaven:

Luke 10:20

Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Phil. 4:3

And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

Heb 12:22-23

²² But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

²³ To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

Isa 4:3

And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:

Mal. 3:16-18

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

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

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

The two books of God represent the two opposite fates of the righteous and the wicked. Just as God will not fail to reward the righteous so He will not fail to punish the wicked. Their record deserving of punishment is right before Him:

Isa 65:6

Behold, IT IS WRITTEN BEFORE ME: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom.

However, for those of us who believe our names are in the book of life because God has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints (Col. 1:12), this is not the time to be complacent; it is not the time to rest on our laurels. Our names can be blotted out of the book of life if we start walking contrary to the walk of a saint:

Rev 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.

Ps 69:28

Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

Ex 32:32

Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which Thou hast written.

Rev 21:27

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

But rest assured. If you persist in faith by His grace to the end, not even the greatest trial to hit the earth (Rev. 3:10), will take your name out of the book of life because you failed to remain loyal to your calling as a saint. During the last three-and-half rule of the antichrist, **YOU WILL SIDE WITH GOD AGAINST THE ANTICHRIST AND ALL THE WORLD:**

Rev 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.

One's name in the book of life is obtained by grace and secured by grace. Christ, to whom the Father has committed all judgment (Matt. 5:22), is able to keep us from falling so that He might present us faultless before the throne of the glorious Father (Jude 1:24). Let's not forget for a split second that we have been put on this earth for a purpose. And that purpose is to know God and to do His will.

To fail to do God's will is to face God's wrath because your name did not make it into His *book of life*. But you can avert all that by trusting in the grace of God made available to you through Jesus. He can make you an obedient child of God; He is able to turn you into a doer of God's will. You can no longer afford to live for yourself. You are not your own. You are to please your Creator. One day when "the books are opened...", you will be called to give account for the life and all the blessings and opportunities He gave you. Don't be found wanting!

