

## Segment II

### The Secret Contents of the Book of Life

#### The Seven Seals

**“Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?’ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.”** (Revelation 5:1-4)

Too many students of apocalyptic prophecy skip over the pivotal importance of the book that was sealed with seven seals, because they do not understand why the book is necessary. It’s as though the seven seals are more important than the contents of the book itself. Actually, the contents of the book have much more significance than the seals securing the book. The exalted purpose of the book gives the seven seals their importance! God wrote a complete history of life before life occurred and sealed it because He did not want anyone to know what He foreknew. Many Christians do not understand how this book resolves an enormous problem for God. The throne room scene described in Revelation 4-6 highlights the fact that sin is a very serious problem in God’s universe. The scene also demonstrates that God has a plan to prevent sin from rising again within His universe. Once you understand the issues involved with sin from Heaven’s perspective, the story of the seven seals will make a lot of sense *just as it reads in the Bible*.

#### The Lamb’s Book of Life

It is important to remember that before sin began, God solved the sin problem! He solved the sin problem by writing a complete history of life in a book. Then, He sealed it with seven seals. The following texts prove in three steps that the book sealed with seven seals is appropriately called the Book of Life.

1. First, John mentions the Book of Life six times in Revelation, and he distinguishes the Book of Life from other books that are in Heaven. (Revelation 3:5; 20:12) Daniel also makes a distinction between “books,” plural and “the Book [of Life],” singular. (Daniel 7:9,10; 12:1) After Jesus (the Lamb) was found worthy to receive the book having seven seals in Revelation 5, John refers to the book with a possessive

noun. He calls it, “the Lamb’s Book of Life” (Revelation 21:27) or “the Book of Life belonging to the Lamb.” (Revelation 13:8) In other words, *after* the Lamb received the book with seven seals from the right hand of the Father, the Lamb possessed “the Book of Life.”

2. Second, the Book of Life, unlike the other books of record in Heaven, remains sealed until the end of the 1,000 years. (Revelation 20:12) This is a critical point. *The Book of Life is not opened or used during the judgment of human beings.* Human beings will be judged according to their actions and choices which are recorded in the books of deeds. (Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Daniel 7:9, 10; Malachi 3:16; Revelation 20:12) When Abel was born to Adam and Eve, his life’s record was recorded in the book of deeds “in real time,” just as it happened. The books of deeds were opened in 1844 and, most likely, Abel’s record was the first to be examined since he was the first person to die. (Daniel 7:10; 8:14) On the other hand, the Book of Life is not opened until the end of the millennium. (Revelation 20:12) According to the Bible, the Book of Life is opened once – at the end of the 1,000 years. (Revelation 20:12) The chronology of the seals indicates the Book of Life is the book sealed with seven seals.
3. Third, we know the book with seven seals is the Book of Life because of its contents. Even though no one knows the specifics found within the book sealed with seven seals (Revelation 5:3), we do know about the contents! Notice this verse: **“If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”** (Revelation 20:15) This verse speaks volumes. Many Christians read this verse and think the Book of Life contains *only* the names of the saved. They interpret the title to mean the “Book of [Eternal] Life.” The Bible does not confer this meaning on the book even though the people who will receive eternal life will be found in the book. The Book of Life includes the life’s record *of everyone* who was given life from God. Every person was originally entered into His book because God foreknew who would receive the gift of life from the beginning. Our choices and actions were prerecorded in God’s book before we had the privilege of living. (See Psalm 139:16.) Naturally, the question rises, “Why was every life prerecorded only to have the names of the wicked blotted out before they were created?” On the basis of perfect foreknowledge, God wrote out a complete history of life before life was created and then He “blotted out” the names of the people who would choose rebellion. He did not blot out

their record of life, He simply blotted out their names.

### Blotted Out?

Perhaps a little background information about “blotting out” names will be helpful. In ancient times, the tribes of Israel kept very accurate records of their family tree. We find two excellent examples of this in the Bible. In Matthew 1, the lineage of Jesus is traced back to Abraham. In Luke 3, the lineage of Jesus is traced back to Adam. It was the custom in those days, to enter the names of the offspring in the official records of the nation because tribal lineage was very important. The land of Canaan was divided according to the size and lineage of each tribe. (Joshua 14:5) Temple responsibilities and duties among the priests were determined by lineage. (Exodus 40; Numbers 4) Even more, God said, **“No one born of a forbidden marriage nor any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, even down to the tenth generation.”** (Deuteronomy 23:2) Whenever an Israelite defiantly violated the law, depending on the offense, God commanded that person to be “cut off” from his people or put to death. If a person was “cut off” from his nation, his name was blotted out of the tribal rolls. Erasures were not possible. The written evidence of that life could not be removed. However, the name was blotted out with an ink blot so that the identity of the wicked person could not be known. This imagery helps to explain two important points. First, God wrote out a complete history of life and He included everyone in the record who would receive life. Then, He blotted out the names of those who would refuse to submit to the Holy Spirit. Second, if this information was “leaked” prematurely, God would have a very difficult time proving that He did not predestine some people to eternal death and some to eternal life *before* they were created. So, the book was sealed – seven times.

My life and your life are recorded in the Book of Life. Because God foreknew who would choose eternal life and who would choose rebellion, He has determined that no one could have access to this information (that is, information indicating who would be saved and lost) until sin’s drama has been completed. So, He *perfectly* sealed the book of life with seven seals and put it in Heaven’s vault. **Keep this thought in mind: The Book of Life remains sealed until the 1,000 years are ended. The Book of Life has nothing to do with the judgment of mankind.** Humanity is not judged or predestined to life or death on the basis of God’s foreknowledge. We are judged according to our deeds. (Revelation 22:12) Our deeds are recorded as they transpire. Angels chronicle our daily actions in the books of deeds. (See Daniel 7:9, 10; Revelation 20:12;

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2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14 and Malachi 3:16.)

### God Proves Three Things

God wrote a complete history of life before life began to prove three things at the end of sin's drama. **First**, He will prove that every being was granted the power of choice. **Second**, He will prove that He did not manipulate our freedom of choice. In other words, by prerecording the lives of everyone in the Book of Life, God can show at the appointed time that even though He foreknew who would rebel and who would submit to His authority, He did not treat anyone unfairly. God's love will not allow Him to treat one rebellious child unfairly. **Third**, the Book of Life will exonerate God from all charges of unrighteousness. When the Book of Life is opened at the end of the thousand years, everyone will see that the contents of the Book of Life are identical to the books of deeds. In other words, God will prove to the universe that He foreknew the outcome of every life before life was granted to the first being. God will prove that He foreknew the rise of sin, and that He was willing to die for sinners from the beginning if they were not defiant sinners. God will prove that He not only gave life to His creatures, but He also gave the power of choice to them so they could rebel against Him if they wanted. He will prove that Jesus was willing to cease to exist for the rest of eternity in order to save sinners. This is God's humility and love – a love that goes beyond finite comprehension.

### Bible Writers Mention the Book of Life

Several Bible writers knew that the Book of Life existed. Notice this conversation between Moses and God: **“But now, please forgive their sin [of Israel] – but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” The Lord replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.”** (Exodus 32:32, 33) Moses knew that God *had written* the history of life in the Book of Life and he begged God to forgive Israel or blot his name out of the book that had been written! God responded to Moses saying that whoever has sinned against Him would be blotted out. This response has led some Christians to conclude that the Book of Life is a dynamic recording, that is, names are added and removed as necessary. This is not the case for two reasons. First, the Book of Life was written and sealed before the creation of the world. (Revelation 17:8) Second, the eternal destiny of people is not decided until they stand before the judgment bar of Christ! (2 Corinthians 5:10) So, God's response to Moses is an assurance that the wicked *have been* blotted out of His book. Moses knew that the book *had been written* – that is, the book had been completed! Therefore,

God’s response to Moses must be understood within this context. God said, “When I wrote the *Book of Life*, I blotted out the names of those who would sin against me.” Notice how this conforms with a statement taken from Revelation concerning the appearing of the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation: “. . . **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 . . .**” (Revelation 17:8) Did you notice when the Book of Life was written in verse 8? Did you also notice whose *names* were left out of the Book of Life at the time it was written? God already knows who will worship the beast and who will not; God knows everything. But (and this is an emphatic “but”), even though God foreknows what we will do, the choice has to be ours! This is freedom. Because God gives us the power of choice, the responsibility for our actions rests on our heads. If we were mere robots, we would have no moral obligation or responsibility. However, in a universe of unfettered freedom, people who have the power of choice also bear responsibility and accountability for their choices.

King David knew about the Book of Life. He wrote, “**May they [the wicked] be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.**” (Psalm 69:28, insertion mine) King David also knew that his entire life record was written in the Book of Life long before he was born. He wrote, “**Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.**” (Psalm 139:16) Jesus alluded to the Book of Life when He said to His disciples, “**However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.**” (Luke 10:20) Paul also mentions the Book of Life by name: “**Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.**” (Philippians 4:3)

### The Seven Seals

Now that we know something about the purpose and contents of the Book of Life, and we know why it was sealed, we naturally want to know about the seven seals that protect the sensitive data inside the book. The seven seals on the Book of Life are associated with seven revelations about Jesus. When the Father wrote the Book of Life, He foreknew the rise of sin and He foreknew that Jesus would die for sinners. This is why John says that Jesus is “**the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world.**” (Revelation 13:8) The Father, Son, and Holy

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Spirit agreed from the beginning that Jesus would undertake the task of resolving the sin problem for man. (Psalm 2; John 3:16) They also agreed that Jesus would be the divine agent who would resolve the sin problem for the Godhead as well. In order to resolve the sin problem for both God and man, Jesus had to be found worthy by angels and men! This is why the angelic host and the twenty-four elders from Earth were summoned to the great convention described in Revelation 4 and 5 and Daniel 7:9. (The twenty-four elders were people taken from Earth and are serving as members of a jury.)

When the solution for sin was presented before this innumerable congregation (the Book of Life contains the solution to the sin problem), everyone present agreed that Jesus alone was worthy to receive the book sealed with seven seals. (Revelation 5) Because the angels and elders have the power of choice, this was not a rubber stamp approval. Jesus was found worthy to redeem man on the basis of His accomplishments, that is, His perfect life and shed blood. (Revelation 5:9) He was also found worthy to exonerate the Godhead of all charges of misconduct on the basis of His perfect submission to the Father's will. (John 6:38; Hebrews 5:7-10) These points are mentioned because no one other than Jesus can solve the sin problem for God or for man. The unique qualifications of Jesus permit Him to resolve the sin problem in seven campaigns. As each seal is broken open on the Book of Life, a new campaign begins on Earth. Actually, this is why the book of Revelation is called, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The book of Revelation explains an incredible series of campaigns that sweep away the mystery and reveal all that Jesus really is! Jesus is more than an angel. Jesus is more than a man. Jesus is fully God!

### **Seven Revelations about Jesus**

Jesus received the Book of Life in 1798 and He broke the first seal at that time. This date will be closely examined in the next section. As each subsequent seal is broken, a new revelation about Jesus is disseminated throughout Heaven and Earth. This process grows in glory and intensity until everyone sees a full disclosure of the Creator. At the end of the thousand years, every being who has received life from Jesus will be present. At the time this book was published, three seals have been broken open and the fourth seal is next. The seven seals contain seven progressive revelations about Jesus:

**Seal 1:** The salvation of Jesus

**Seal 2:** The teachings of Jesus

**Seal 3:** The judgment bar of Jesus

**Seal 4:** The authority of Jesus

**Seal 5:** The faith of Jesus

**Seal 6:** The glory of Jesus

**Seal 7:** The deity of Jesus

The question could be asked, why are there seven revelations of Jesus? Seven is a perfect number – God’s signature showing completion. The Father has predetermined a complete revelation of Jesus because the Father wants the universe to understand something about the operation of the Godhead. Jesus has the power, prerogatives and rights of the Father and He is due the same honor and worship! (Colossians 1:16-19; John 5:23) Because Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1; Revelation 19:13), Jesus is the spokesperson for the Godhead. Jesus is that member of the Godhead who lives among His creation as one of us, so that He might speak to us and reveal the will and ways of the Father to us. Because Jesus humbled Himself to come, live, and die as a man, the Father, at just the right time, stepped aside and exalted Jesus above the highest heavens! In this continuing process, the universe will learn that Jesus is coeternal and coequal with the Father. Then, at the end of the thousand years, after receiving the highest honor that can be bestowed, Jesus will give His position back to the Father so that He may live among His created beings. Paul describes this incredible scene writing, **“The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he [the Father] has put everything under his [Jesus] feet.”** Now when it says that **‘everything’ has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this [destroyed death], then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.**” (1 Corthinians 15:26-28, insertions mine)

Think about this for a moment. After Jesus has received all the glory, praise and accolades that can be given, He does not remain there, eternally basking in that glory and fame. Rather, He chooses, once again, to be subject to the Father so that He can live among His creation. What a Creator! What a God! What love! What a stunning revelation about the humility and meekness of the Godhead! “Like Father – like Son!”