

The Book of Life

PART 1

All of God's creation is written into the Book of Life initially, when He forms us in our mother's womb and breathes the breath of life into us. All creatures, big and small, are precious in His sight because one of the things so unique to our Father is that He is "Creator God." We know not one sparrow falls to the ground to perish without His knowing, same is true for humanity, as we are created to rule over His animal kingdom, being formed into the likeness of His image, for His divine plan and purpose to tend to the Earth. He oversees all of His creation and is vast in His careful watch, being mindful of all living and breathing beings, both humans and animals, without fail. He says... Let everything that has breath praise the Lord, being in awe of His majesty. Our Father, Creator God, says in Genesis... He breathes the breath of life into all flesh. So the Book of Life is so relevant here... as He declares life into both humans and animals, they are granted the gift of life. The key is... who remains within life, both spiritually and physically. Who gets blotted out and who is sustained fully. We are going to go over all that and more today in our study about – The Book of Life.

***Some of today's Scripture references I am going to paraphrase, so take good notes and please go back and read the passages in fullness yourselves. Other times, I will read the scripture word for word – but remember, we are to study God's Word for ourselves to enable us to be approved by Him.

In Psalm 139 are beautiful words that describe how intimately our Father, Who created us, know us. Due to time, I am not going to read it today, but encourage you to read it on your own some time because it is very touching in many ways. We all feel a little forgotten at times, but this chapter will remind you just how precious you are to Him because you were thought of, designed perfectly by His hands and necessary to be present right now on Earth for His purpose and glory. You matter, so never think otherwise, you are beautiful soul formed by Him personally.

Our Father's mercies are new every morning upon us. Mercy is not getting what you deserve, which is death and grace is getting what you don't deserve, sustaining life. His mercy upon us holds back any deserved punishment we have due to us for rebelling against our Creator. Remember, mercy given to others in their shortcomings, guarantees we shall receive in turn mercy from our Father due to our shortcomings. His grace bestows upon us undeserved favor because He loves His creation, which we are a part of, despite ourselves – He pours grace into our lives in order we shall not perish eternally. His mercies never end and moving compassion towards us always in our misery and His grace supplies us with hope in our times of need. What an amazing Father we have that pours out love like this, a being that is perfect to love is truly hard to comprehend with our feeble minds.

We need a foundational understanding of the Book of Life before we move on. The Book of Life goes all the way back to the OT and is a Jewish term directly relating to a scroll that an army would keep with names of soldiers who are present and living. It was kept so they knew who was **AMONG THE LIVING**, which is very important to remember. If a particular soldier would die in battle, his name was **BLOTTED OUT** and removed from among the scroll of the living. Isn't that interesting? Also, just like God's Book of Life only contains the names of living – spiritually so did the commander's Book of the Living Scroll only contains those soldiers who were alive and actively engaged in battle. Can you all see the similarities here? So to sum it up and apply it to us... **WE** are in the Book of Life, as long as we remain in the fight of faith, enduring until the very end... this is a spiritual battle, not one of flesh and blood, but one in which we engage with Jesus our Lord and Savior to defeat the influences of principalities of darkness that attempt to influence us continually.

I can see already, this study is going to take two, possibly three broadcasts. I hope that is okay? We are starting out with milk, only to end up with meat on this one because there is just so much to glean in His word about the Book of Life and we are hungry for it all, aren't we?

In Exodus 32:32-33, God told Moses... those who sin against Him shall be blotted out of His book. Since we know the wages of sin is death, this makes perfect sense. Unless, we fall upon our knees to repent before Jesus and be washed clean, we would have no hope to escape for unrighteous deeds done against our Father. Knowing Jesus personally assures us to be redeemed and delivered from the sting of death caused by sin in our lives. As we look to Jesus as the Holy One to imitate, He trains us how to be a child of God. Because our Father loves us so, He pours His saving grace into us without any merit of our own and teaches us like the good Father He is, that our choices do have consequences, both good and bad – giving us freedom to choose and even make mistakes as long as we repent when we do so. We may deserve death, but due to Jesus saving us from ourselves... He frees us from all the wages one might have to pay.

Just a couple little details:

- Where sin abounds equally so does grace, as His love is sent to us through Jesus, which in turn covers a multitude of our sins done in ignorance.
- If we knowingly disobey, His grace is pulled back a bit to let us experience the cost of rebellion so that we turn away from that sin quickly and repent in order we do not die in a sinful state.
- Quite often we may receive in payment for sins we commit a consequence that ends up saving us from eternal damnation in the end. He is not punishing us, but letting us feel the wages of death sin invites into our lives.
- It is through the conviction of the Holy Spirit's training we learn and are corrected in order we know we can only go so far to drift away from Him, before He will keep us away from that which may lead us astray to the point of no return. This is so our names, those who are appointed not to perish from the beginning of formation, will never be blotted out of His Book of Life and lose the promise of eternal life.
- Every one of us were all children of wrath at some point and time – in direct line to receive God's wrath as a reaping to what we previously had sown in dishonor to Him. But Jesus came to deliver us and set the captives free – to basically save us from ourselves, so we may counted among the redeemed.
- Just as we once walked in darkness, He brought us into His marvelous light, so now He shines forth from within us, destroying all remnants of darkness which still remain. His light in us, exposes darkness, destroying it forever. This is the process of sanctification and purification spoken of in *Acts 3:19 which says... Repent, be converted, in that your sins be blotted out.* And remember here – we just learned specifically what blotted out means – dead. So when we repent and are converted into a new creature, the will to sin in us is dead.
- Jesus sanctifies us and purifies us and He also requires both of us in order we remain cleansed and pure. In *Luke 13:3 it says... Unless we repent, we shall perish.* Jesus is not harsh or mean to do this for us, it is just nothing unclean or evil is permitted to enter into His kingdom. He does this for us, not to us.
- His light destroys all sin/darkness in us and in the world actually. We are to be confessing our sinful ways and move on from them, not returning to them like a dog eats vomit over and over. No matter how many times we go to Jesus in our broken state, He is just to forgive us. *1 John 1:9 says... IF we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive them and cleanse us from that sin.* Once we are clean, we guard with all we are to insure nothing that taints comes back in. Who Jesus sets free, is free indeed. As we resist the sin, the desire leaves with it by the power and blood of Jesus.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 says... When the wicked are revealed He shall destroy them with the brightness of His coming.

I happen to believe; these are those who were never written into the Book of Life from the beginning. We do not know all the ins and outs of the mysteries of God, especially regarding salvation that's for sure. But what I do know is Jesus would never destroy one of His own to perish eternally, unless they completely choose on their own to reject Him. When Jesus truly is Lord and Ruler in our lives – He oversees us to Author and finish us unto completion. Outwardly, it may look very messy at times and people may think we are unredeemable, but Jesus doesn't think like us. He died for sinners, not saints, remember?

Anyplace Jesus dwells, sin cannot abound and darkness cannot rule, including in us. Once He has His proper placement as ruler/Lord in our lives, we are continually being changed by His commands. If we are not being changed from corruptible to incorruptible, the truth is we may not even be in the Lamb's Book of Life – because Jesus keeps His own on a short leash and the ones who like to resist Him suffer many afflictions and yet shall be saved in the end. Just like our own children – some are easily broken to lead and others are more stubborn and stiff-necked suffering at every turn the discipline we inflict for their goodwill – while yet, both children remain always in the family unit or should if the parents are Godly. Same is true for God's family.

So we have the flesh body the Father breathed the breath of life into when He formed us in our mother's womb and then we have souls in Heaven for those who are reborn into eternal life with His breath breathed into them, granting them life from the sting of natural death. Once we become a living and breathing soul by His saving grace through Jesus, we are changed, our whole desires and actions align with His will as He molds us into His image. If we are not being changed, our flesh religion is dead and we are simply following a religion, remaining unchanged – not placed into the Book of Life as a soul destined to Heaven eternally. Hope all that makes sense before we move on?

Changing gears here...

In *Daniel 12:1* which says, *when Michael stands up [during a time of great rivals between light and dark on Earth] he shall assist in the deliverance process of the children of God.* So if we are found still here at this time, we shall be sent divine help from the Father. I would say this is both a great and terrible time indeed, depending on if you are found in darkness or in light. This angel is very strong and a mighty warrior, who watches over God's own children, **ONLY THOSE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE** in that exact moment shall be delivered. During that point in time, souls will be awakened found either alive or in a place of shame and contempt. But here's the best part... Those who are wise [referencing the wise virgins] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament because they have been used to turn many to the righteousness of Jesus and will shine like the stars [angels] in the Heavens.

Please take this with a pile of salt, read it and pray for the Lord to show you Himself... it's in Genesis 1 & 2, where the Father created man in His own image, without a natural body because that part comes later in His divine plan. It goes on to say, everything He created was good, this is on the fifth day... on the sixth day He finished the Heavens and the earth and all His hosts – remember, man was created without flesh at this point. He rested on the seventh day to set an example to us as humanity, rest and refreshing is equally as important as works for the rejuvenation process of the human body form. As He reflected on that seventh day, it is written He declared – *these are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created in the day that the Lord God made Heaven and earth.* Moments later it rained, which He held back because there was no flesh man on the earth yet to till the ground, He then took the dust and formed man and **BREATHED INTO HIS NOSTRILS THE BREATH OF LIFE AND MAN BECAUSE A LIVING SOUL.** Man was as the hosts/angels of Heaven until that moment and look what happened... when God gives you life, your soul lives. And how does it stay alive? By what you nourish it with... What tree you eat of... You become what you eat... spiritually speaking

of course, your soul and mine goes with us to Heaven, not our flesh. For now, the flesh is a vessel the soul is housed in, thankfully those of us who belong to the Lord will return back to Him when our flesh perishes. There are many discrepancies about the soul and I do not want to be controversial or like I am against what others may share and hopefully this won't... Your soul is uniquely you... making you stand out and different than everyone else. The Father brought your flesh body to life by breathing your soul into it. A soulless body would have no life, so to speak. Our soul makes us unique, while the flesh body is basically the same for all of humanity – generally speaking, we have two eyes, hands, legs, ten toes, hair all over, blood and oxygen, etc... But this is not the case for a soul – each one is different; there are not two that are identical. Using twins for example – their flesh body is identical, as is their DNA, but their personalities/desires/mannerisms are unique to them. The fingerprints of God are placed upon the soul, exhibiting various characteristics of His divine nature, when you are fearfully and wonderfully made. But what happens to this divinity etched in His creation? They seek out and permit that which can contaminate the soul by what is seen, heard and what they take in via the thought process – you see? The mystery of iniquity is already at work... within us – so we need Jesus to bring us back to life, rise us up, cleanse us and deliver us from all evil influences in that we may return to the innocence of our first estate... And I hope I didn't lose you – this is a long way around the track to saying... You shall become that which you were destined to be from the beginning of time, a piece of all the hosts, included within all the generations our Creator God formed and called good on that sixth day. That is of course, if you choose Him over rebellion and not fall, as a third of the angels did who made a conscience choice to seek Lucifer as their god and not Our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ of Nazareth and the Holy Spirit – the Trinity, 3 in One.

So of course, one day we may wonder whose names were never written into the Book of Life from the foundation of the World... What matters most is... Is ours? So, it goes without saying, there are dead men walking upon the Earth spiritually speaking that is, and chances are each one of them were counted as such ourselves until Jesus came in to be Lord in our lives, redeeming us and giving us life to be counted among the living. But until that moment we surrender to Him, we too are like brute beasts inwardly, needing much purifying and molding into the Image of God, over the master of iniquity sitting upon the throne of our hearts. After all, where is that Holy place called a temple that Jesus reigns as Master and Lord – our hearts/souls where all desire and words flow from. If He isn't ruling there, just who is? The man of lawlessness, the Anti-christ... everything that stands against the goodness of the Lord Jesus, obedience, Godly order and get this, you ready... Rest, rest from our own labors and works – complete and whole – just like our Father rested on the 7th day, we do too. And we then are serene and calm, creating an atmosphere of only that which is good, eating only of the Tree of Good. Once you choose good, you no longer need evil's influence to force that choice by eating of that Tree. Last thing, and I know this is long and complex... but one more thing... All souls have chosen one master or the other. Some of us have already chosen and that's great. But many have only proclaimed Jesus with their mouths while their hearts are still far from Him while yet, they are still marked for salvation. So, a shaking is coming like when one vomits... When Jesus vomits the lukewarm out of His mouth with a great shaking, they will be forced to choose which master they serve, declaring of the heart whether they are with Jesus or against Him. I pray we are ready for the purging of hypocrisy we all shall witness in that season. May we praise the Lord and encourage our souls to stay within His fold, on the straight and narrow path of righteousness, in that we endure only sound doctrine until the very end. I am reminded of how, it is impossible the Elect be deceived. Which are those who are already surrendered to Him, watching and waiting and especially, loving His appearing – every moment of everyday.

Okay... that was a lot to digest. Much meat – so I am going to call that Part 1 of our Study on THE BOOK OF LIFE. And we by no means are done with it yet, only a portion. Next time we will go over much deeper some key points we discussed today, Lord willing.

PART 2

Remaining in the Book of Life

We are now moving into part two of our study about the Book of Life today and going a little deeper into “Remaining in the Book of Life” knowing people can get blotted out by God, no longer being counted among the living. We are most certainly living in a very sobering time and serious time, which should cause us all to take a truthful look into our own relationship with Jesus, insuring it is authentic.

We still have a few more scriptures to go over today that mention the Book of Life. Just like last time I will tell you where to find them, but only paraphrase them in our study. Starting with...

Philippians 4:3 which talks specifically about those who labor in the Gospel and who have their names already written in the Book of Life. This tells us our names are written in God’s Book before we pass from Earth and in this case He speaks of all those who do His work preaching the Gospel... which can be anyone of us actually. If you carry the good news of the Gospel and you share it with others, you are a co-laborer with Jesus.

Psalm 56:8 tells us, He records our tears in His book. Often our hearts cry out to our Father, without words and to think even these are recorded under our name is amazing and shows what a loving and compassionate Father we actually do have. He is just so very patient with His children. Which is good, considering we need much patience from Him when He deals with us, since we can be so foolish at times.

Psalm 69:28 is a little longer story... In this chapter we can read how David is actually crying and begging God to blot out of the Book of Life those who seek to harm him or are planning against him – he says they are full of iniquity and he is desperate for the Father to intervene. David was a man after God’s heart and although he made several mistakes, he had one incredible attribute – he usually only went so far, rarely taking things into his own hands for solving, but relied on the Lord’s intervention. He may have cried a lot... but he waited and believed the Lord would provide for him just in time. In this chapter David goes on to plead with the Father, saying his heart is broken and he is in tears. However, once the Father intervened, David was settled in heart, mind and soul and ends up praising the Lord for saving not only him, but all of Zion. Beautiful story of desperation and redemption. I don’t really feel comfortable myself asking God to remove anyone from the Book of Life actually, not even someone who is out to destroy and harm me. But David did... and God intervened and most importantly got the glory.

We do have to very much to go over today... And sometimes, it is the end where we should begin, like today. Right in the Book of Revelation, which is the Biblical book that reveals Jesus’s appearing once and for all. It is a great and terrible time, depending on whether you are written in His Book and stay there or not... Again, both serious and sobering, but something within us gravitates to this book in the Bible, doesn’t it? The Lord most certainly saved the best for last, including in the Bible. Throughout the Book of Revelation His Book is mentioned – hopefully you will get a chance to go back and read it again, it strengthens us every time we read it. The first verse is found in –

Revelation 3:5 that says, only a very few people remain in Sardis with undefiled garments. They are those who shall walk with Jesus in white for they are worthy. They have overcome all those things set before them, remaining untainted so Jesus clothes them in white raiment (means made whole in Jesus) and it is written HE WILL NOT BLOT THEIR NAME OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE, but say their names openly to both the Father and His angels.

Revelation 13:8 tells us there are some who are saints while yet they are overcome because they fall prey to worshipping the beast... therefore, these fallen away saints end up worshipping this beast because their names are not written in the Book of Life to begin with, so they are led away into captivity unfortunately.

Revelation 17:8 is when the Bible describes a time in which the beast rises out of the bottomless pit and goes into perdition (meaning eternal misery and loss of eternal life & excluded from the Kingdom of God) and it takes all that belong to his kingdom with him. At that time, those who are written in the Book of Life will marvel at the idea that some were never written into the Book of Life ever – this is the separation of the wheat/tares and sheep/goats. Until that time, all were mixed in together, from this point forward they are clearly seen and set apart. Those in the Book of Life shall remain so in the Kingdom of God and those not in the Book of Life are permanently blotted out, belonging to the man of perdition.

Next we have Revelation 20:12-15 where all of humanity stands before God and the books were opened... Two books actually, the Book of Life and the Book of the Dead. Everyone is judged by God according to what was written about their works (what they had done) while they were here on Earth. Everyone who was not written into the Book of Life is then cast into the lake of fire, this is called the second death because they have already died spiritually.

Revelation 21:27 mentions the Book of Life, but to get it in context we need to know the backstory. This chapter is the revealing of the New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ – the Lamb's wife... It tells us there is no darkness in it, that nothing defiled may enter or anything that is an abomination or contains a lie... only those who are written in the Book of Life, occupy the Temple of God, the chosen, those who are pure, as He is pure. Just fyi... Side note, if Jesus tells us to not marry someone we are unyoked with spiritually – the same will be true for Him. He shall not marry a Bride that is unclean and unholy.

Last one in Revelation is... Revelation 22:19, but we will back up to Revelation 22:11 first, which states a permanent declaration which is quite sobering due to the finality of things. People always convince themselves they have more time to be reconciled with Jesus, putting off changing and repenting. And although we do not know when the time will come when all is set in stone, it surely will come eventually. And it says in verse 11 at that moment, He that is unjust, let him be unjust still and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still and he that is holy, let him be holy still. All will be without excuse that day... no more justifying of sin or making us reasons why we choose rebellion over deliverance. And if that doesn't sober someone up, verse 19 should really shake us awake. It says... if anyone takes away from the words of the Bible, specifically relating to the Spirit of the Lord (which is the true meaning of prophecy) or if anyone adds to His Word, they shall be written out of the Book of Life, removed from the Holy City (which is the New Jerusalem – His wife) and excluded from all that is written in God's word – His promises to His own.

I know people think they have time to get on the narrow path, but my question is... What if they don't? Because truly there is never enough time to surrender to Jesus for His author and finishing of us. He says, I am coming quickly and the Spirit and The Bride says... Come! Today is the day of salvation, I pray none of us take this lightly and be passed over by Him.

Next, we are moving into going over the 7 Spirits of God, specifically regarding the Church of Sardis. And I can already see this study is going to require a third broadcast – there is just so much wisdom and teaching in the Word to go over so we receive the fullness of the scriptures. I hope that is okay with everybody!

Do we know the 7 Spirits of God? Or in other words, His attributes that He places into us that defines our image aligns with His and His will for us. If He abides in us personally, we demonstrate His characteristics via His Spirit which is Holy. He is Holy and therefore, we should be as well or... the truth is, we are not abiding in Him. We are not finished yet, which is an excuse we like to tell ourselves quite often... But how about we encourage our own souls, believing He is doing a perfect work in us and each day we have an invitation to walk the narrow path with Jesus, changed from the inside out as the new creature in Christ we were designed to be before the World entered into us? It is called... moving from glory to glory... So where

are we going? Are we looking back, holding onto our sinful ways or are we moving forward with eyes on the Prize of Jesus, letting Him have His way in and through us?

But, back to the 7 Sprits of God found in Isaiah 11...

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Strength, Spirit of the Lord (Prophecy), Knowledge and Fear of the Lord (reverence & awe of Him). All of these qualities are available to us because of Jesus and we should have no lack, meaning all are equally available and important for completeness. Having one or two without the others does not equal wholeness. All seven represent wholeness, a perfect work. And remember our Lord leaves nothing undone or remnants scattered or left over. This is why there are 7 Churches in Revelation... to demonstrate a complete work as an overcomer... not that we can overcome anything of ourselves, but when we surrender to Jesus it is in Him we overcome everything. If we doubt any of it, we've doubted it all and He shall not perform a complete work in us. But the promises to those who do overcome are assured and beautiful. Just think, the more Holy we become the more glory He receives – that alone is a reason to lay your life down for Jesus, in that He be glorified. Especially considering all He did for us to give us life, conquering death's stronghold on us like He did.

I know this is meat and I promise I am not trying to choke anyone... but some of us who desire sincere milk need a little encouragement it is time to put the baby bottles down and grow, moving on to the accountability found in the meat of the Word. We sure do not want to be found ever learning from the truth as a two year old in a 60 year old body. There is a season for all things purposed... a time to learn and a time to obey what was learned. We cannot grow spiritually if we are refusing to stop soiling ourselves. And how does one grow? We fall to the ground and die. We die to self, only to be resurrected back to life in newness. So this is why I chose the Church of Sardis for us to study, plus it mentions the Book of Life, which goes along with our teaching.

The Church of Sardis is found in Revelation 3:1-6 and is described as having living works on Earth, they are spiritually dead only to be eventually blotted out of the Book of Life with the exception of those who overcame. Due to time, you all can read for yourselves the exact scriptures, I am going to just paraphrase what is written regarding these failing church members. We already went over when and how they will be blotted out, now we will go over why...

- They absolutely refuse to die to self and be filled with the 7 Sprits of God
- They prefer to perfect themselves over letting Him be Lord in their lives and being purified
- Lean heavily on their own works to enter into the Kingdom of God
- Reject the notion of becoming perfected through repentance and surrender of self to Jesus
- These are those who only know about Jesus – as their unchanged and unrepentant hearts stay far from Him. And because they do not know Him personally, He will come as a thief. And why? They are not watching and therefore do not discern the current season of His return they are in. These are also the ones who will beat their fellow servants, convincing themselves Jesus will delay His coming just for them so they can keep sinning, delusional into thinking sin is okay because Jesus understands and He will not hold them accountable for the unforgiven sinful nature of the flesh.
- These church members do not comprehend their garments of flesh are defiled, because they refuse to wash them in the blood of the Lamb through the dying to self in order He clothe them in His garment of covering through His sacrifice of blood He made acceptable for the cleansing of our souls. Which is where the wearing of white raiment is placed upon us... Being complete and whole in Jesus, rejecting sin that taints the body, in Him we are strengthened to go and sin no more. When He makes us whole,

the desire to sin flees away from us. We may still sin occasionally, but in doing so we are convicted to turn from all evil, restored and made whole to keep walking in Jesus's righteousness.

In this chapter addressing the Church of Sardis it is written that nothing good is found in this church, even though they have a great reputation that they are alive and belong in the fold of believers – they are actually spiritually dead in the sight of God. It ends with saying... There are a few names of those who overcome and do not have defiled garments (how you appear outwardly – and more) who are worthy to actually walk with Jesus and not be blotted out of the Book of Life.

About these garments... just briefly...

Mathew 9:16

No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, ^{G2440} for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, ^{G2440} and the rent is made worse.

Jesus makes all things new, including us... trying to put our new life on top of our old will never work... We must die to the old man, in that the new man may be raised from the dead or we will remain spiritually dead in God's sight – doing dead works. Some people, like these in Sardis, attempt to wear the old and new at the same time... but God sees, God knows... and unless we repent of the old and put on the new, we will not be ready as an overcomer and clothed in His garment of completeness. This is a garment only He can put on us, but it is our choice as to whether we take off our old one.

The old garment controls the body by the flesh and what it desires. The new garment is a covering which overrides all flesh desires. It is Jesus Who raises up our mortal corruptible bodies to be incorruptible.

This is just more meat that might offend for those who do not comprehend the spiritual side of things. But, if we can overcome the offense of it, we shall be set free from sin, putting on the righteousness of the Lord, knowing our own righteousness is like a filthy rag no matter how many times we wash it.

The easiest person to deceive is often ourselves, just like we saw in Sardis and I am sure there were some really amazing people there who served the Lord and yet, leaning upon their own works and righteousness they were considered spiritually dead because they did not welcome in Jesus for their cleansing. This is a good reminder to us all, we can have an impression or perception about ourselves that is totally contrary to God's all-knowing truthful understanding of us personally because He not only knows what we do and our thoughts, but why we do what we do – our intent.

So our Lord knows distinctly who only has a form of godliness as a hypocrite would or who genuinely belongs inside His fold as a child of God. It is impossible to deceive God, although it is quite easy to deceive others, especially ourselves.

We also should never console ourselves with the opinion of others, as it is God and God Alone we are to please and be concerned with His approval or disapproval of us. Especially when it comes to salvation. Time and again I have witnessed people assuring one another no matter what, even if they stay in rebellion, they will end up in Heaven with Jesus. We cannot speak that over anyone because we don't know for sure if He finds them spiritually alive or spiritually dead. It is very, very foolish to trust anyone but the Lord concerning if we are counted among the living or the dead. We barely, if even, know this for ourselves... let alone anyone else. I am in constant fear of the Lord, although serving Him with gladness... I know I may not make into His Kingdom unless I remain humble and repent continually. And even then... It is up to Jesus to bring me the whole way through or I would fall away and not endure until the very end.

We learned today how Sardis had a name (reputation) of being alive, but were actually spiritually dead. This reminds me of who we think are Holy and assured to enter in, in essence may not and some people we perceive to be dead are actually counted worthy and clothed in white raiment. What people think is absolutely unimportant because they cannot see in advance the finished work of a heart placed in Jesus's hands – whether that heart end up dark or light in the end – only Jesus knows for sure. People only see the outside of us, based on what we show them. God sees the inside and nothing is hidden from Him.

Our Lord is not harsh or short with patience thankfully. He consistently, unwavering and unchanging gives us warnings to quickly strengthen the good held within us, even if we teeter on being spiritually dead – He is full of lovingkindness to remind us we are spiritually asleep, in need of repentance to be made whole and fortified to sin no more. At the same time He casts our confessed sins into the sea of forgetfulness and remembers them no more. How amazing is that – that with a softened heart in humility, we can cry out to Jesus and receive a clean slate.

But... there's always a but... If we refuse to watch and pray, standing ready and alert for Jesus's coming we will remain undone, fragmented void of relying on the Lord for His perfect work of cleansing and renewal. If we are longing for His appearing with excitement it is impossible to fall asleep and become unaware of the eternal world promised to us. Those who focus too much on this world have eyes and ears focused on it to the point way too much of this world yet remains in them. But if Jesus is in you... He is your first love and focus more than anything offered in this temporal world. You have set your sight on things above...

Just a couple more life lessons we can glean from the Church of Sardis because when we read the Word and apply it to obey, we do not have to walk through all the struggles they faced.

The Lord tells this church "I have not found your works perfect in My sight." Which to me, even the thought of having a perfect work seems overwhelming and impossible because our works are so imperfect. However, when something we do is God inspired and led by Him and He uses us through obedience to do a work, it then is viewed as perfect. But more about this church... Did you notice how these people have no Jezebel influence – which is great and they also are not running after Balaam and such – which is wonderful BUT... it is not perfected yet because they are fearful of the work of God in their own lives which leads to Him doing a perfect work in us. They actually run away from His discipline, remaining a child of wrath.

If we do not believe holiness is attainable or what Jesus said about "Go and sin no more" or that wholeness is possible, or deliverance from sin with even the possibility of a changed heart producing the good fruit of a changed lifestyle then the Lord will rebuke us, just as He said He would do with this church.

Sometimes people will get so comfortable with their sin they keep it, excuse it and do not even know Jesus as Deliverer, which is the way of escape He makes for us that keeps us from falling away. The Lord desires our works to be perfect in that He is glorified in and through us, which is impossible if we are leading ourselves. All the works we do in sight of men are imperfect because we want their recognition, but the most perfect works of all are those only the Lord knows about and it is these works we receive the greatest reward for because they come directly from Him. Fasting, saving souls, tithing, prayer, singing, preaching if done first for man to see is an imperfect work. But if all we do, we do unto the Lord – our reward will be perfect, just as He is perfect.

And sometimes He does let others see what we do unto Him. Everything we do unto the Lord for Him to be glorified and seen, should only be revealed to others by Him. He will never be okay sharing His glory with mere humanity. Anything good in us or in what we say or do is only Him moving through us and it is only good or perfect because He is the source of it.

Scripture tells us to “Hold fast to repentance” meaning – Keep it always! In the last days repentance will seem unnecessary to most to the point many will fall away because of it. We know this because the Word says... Many will be drawn away by their own lusts. Even at this very moment, several people in the church bristle and get offended when someone brings up the word REPENT. We do know by God’s Word, in the last days God’s people will hold fast to repent and those who are not His will reject it entirely, leaning on their own understanding instead of studying to show themselves approved before God by apply what is written.

Again, Jesus will only come as a thief to those who are caught unaware, off guard. A child of darkness does not light pure light so in essence is considered an unbeliever or rather carnal Christian, void of change. The end times will come upon them like birth pains – suddenly, painful and unable to stop... These wise virgins are unable to enter into the bridal chamber, being unwise and drunk. For a child of light who is awake and wise, Jesus will not come as a thief, but rather will appear to an overcomer who is alert and watching. Because you are not in darkness and drunkenness but rather sober that day shall not overtake you as a thief would.

One thing I have noticed is how those who are not ready, right now, at this very moment... know they aren’t and often pray Jesus delay His coming for various reasons. But those who are ready for Jesus, pray for His return. It reminds me of when in Revelation it says... And the Spirit and the Bride say come Lord Jesus. Of course we are always standing ready and yet, trusting Him for the timing of it all, diligently working for Him while it is day. You can do both by the way... you can long for His return, which waiting and working until that day. It is not either or like some say it is...

The wise virgins trim their wicks through repentance. We also keep our garments white and undefiled by walking with Jesus continually no matter what and trusting Him... Even if... He is good. We know that no matter what influences or afflictions come unto us, we will not deny His Name that gives power to the weak, in that we stay on the narrow path with Him. It says they are those who are counted worthy in prayer and able to stand before Him and walk with Him and escape all things that are Earthy. As an overcomer of the World, of sin and self... Your name is promised to never be erased or blotted out of the Book of Life because you are hidden in Jesus, dead to self – no longer sinning against the Lord, but being purged from it. Jesus confesses the names of all the overcomers before both His Father and His Angels... so help is always on the way. In Jude 24 it says one day Jesus will present us faultless before our Father and He shall keep us from falling. Thank You Lord!

Here’s the issue though... Mathew 10:33 says... Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.

How would he deny Jesus in an unconventional manner? By not permitting Him to do a perfect work in us, by not allowing His discipline to cleanse us or remove all rebellion from us by uprooting it or even by excusing our shortcomings in place of letting Him teaching us deliverance through obedience – just to name a few. We cannot expect to just keep denying Jesus’s Holy ways that He commanded us to obey and be counted worthy to stand before Him as His own. Either we strive to be an imitator of the Lord or we are doing dead works. Remember, the Bible says we can deny Him by word or deed, it’s the same thing. So if we deny Jesus in anyway – He shall deny us before His Father. Quite sobering, isn’t it? Like an alarm clock to our soul to get serious in our spiritual walks.

Just a couple more points in closing... We have sort of come full circle in many ways at the Lord’s leading. Guess what those found written in the Lamb’s Book of Life eat to remain spiritually cleansed and ready without falter? They eat only of the Tree of Life for spiritual nourishment and strength; completely avoiding the Tree of Good and Evil and why? It is forbidden to eat of that tree, the Father changes not, what was forbidden then is still forbidden now. *Mathew 4:4 describes this perfectly... Jesus was fasting and being tempted by*

the enemy and replied: It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And how does our Lord speak to us today for the most part? When we read His Word – which is full of nourishment for us to live by, satisfying our souls. Jesus is the Word made flesh... remember when He scared people to death when He told them to eat of His body and drink of His blood and several retreated from Him? Same principal, when we too receive in the Word understanding of the ways of Jesus documented in the Bible, we are partaking of Him for nourishment. Which of course is just one element to what He was describing that vastly confused the wise.

Last thing... We are told to REJOICE because our names are written in the Book of Life! Do you know many people, even believers do not rejoice over this? Lord have mercy... without Jesus, we too would be like dead men walking waiting to be plucked up and thrown into everlasting fire...

So that is where we will wrap up our Book of Life study. I pray it has been enlightening and encouraging to you in some way. It says in 2 Timothy 1:7 that the Lord has given us a SOUND mind... and I truly believe without the study of His Word, none of us would be sober and of a sound mind. I know I wouldn't be. But in place of all the nonsense we can always go back to His Word and be grounded, strengthened and encouraged to face whatever may come that is sent to shake us, He holds us firm always. When we study His Word, all blinders are removed and we recover to endure, holding fast with great hope to His victory and promises, which never fail. Thank You Lord for the miraculous healing and wholeness You impart into us when we seek Your Word and believe.