

The Inscrutable Question: The Last Judgment: The Second Resurrection, the Book of Life, & the Books of Works, Rev 20:12a-15

10- The verb “to stand” is the perfect active participle of:

ἵστημι, *histemi* - “standing”

perfect: Intensive; the perfect tense shows the progress of an act to a point of culmination and the existence of its finished results. The intensive perfect calls for special attention to be directed to the results of the action and therefore causes intensified stress to be placed upon the existing reality: all unbelievers will be brought before the Lord Jesus Christ at the Last Judgment and stand at attention before Him in His courtroom.

active: All the unbelievers of history produce the action of the verb.

part.: Circumstantial; indicates attendant circumstances. They are there as a result of consequences that were brought about by their rejection of the gospel in time.

11- This judgment was prophesied by Daniel in the Old Testament and by our Lord in the New Testament.

Daniel 12:2 - Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground shall awaken [**resurrection of the dead at the conclusion of all dispensations beginning with Christ**], these [**those written in the book of life in verse 1**] to eternal life, but others to disgrace and eternal rejection [**those not written in the book of life: unbelievers out from Torments assembled before the Great White Throne**].

John 5:27 - “He [**God the Father**] gave Him [**Jesus Christ**] authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man.

v. 28 - “Stop being amazed at this, for the time is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice;

v. 29 - they shall come out, those who have done intrinsic good [**faith alone in Christ alone**] to a resurrection of life [**first resurrection: rapture, Second Advent, Millennium**] and they who practice evil [**rejection of Christ followed by human good and evil**] to a resurrection of judgment [**second resurrection before the Great White Throne**].”

12- The indictment is presented based on evidence accumulated in two sets of records. The first is the nominative plural noun:

βιβλία, *biblia* - “books”

12- The final prepositional phrase of the verse indicates that the records kept in these books document the production of human good and evil motivated by human viewpoint.

13- Since they did not believe in Christ for salvation and eternal life then they are left with the task of achieving a level of righteousness equal to that of God but by means of human energy and effort.

14- Consequently, they will be judged from the books of works instead of the other source of evidence, the book of life. Here we find:

τοῖς βιβλίον, *tois biblion* - “the book”

15- The book of life originally recorded the names of every member of the human race. However, when any person dies having not believed in Christ as Savior, his name is blotted out of the book of life.

- 16- Following the golden calf incident in the *Jornada* Moses made intercession with the Lord seeking divine forgiveness for the Israelites' sins. In fact, Moses uses the word "atonement" in his proclamation to the people in:

Exodus 32:30 - And it came about on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the Lord, perhaps I can make an atonement for your sin."

- 17- The word "atonement" translates the Hebrew noun, כִּפָּר, *kaphar* which means literally, "to reconcile." Moses' intention was to petition the Lord on behalf of the people seeking a means by which their grievous sin might be forgiven.

- 18- Moses proposed to the Lord that his name be stricken from the book of life as an atoning sacrifice for the people.

Exodus 32:32 - "But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!"

The "book" refers to that mentioned by David in Psalm 69:28 and Daniel in Daniel 12:2. The isagogics of this term is provided by:

Keil, C. F. and F. Delitzsch. *The Pentateuch. Vol. 2 in Biblical Commentary of the Old Testament.* Translated by James Martin. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968). 231:

This expression is founded upon the custom of writing the names of the burgesses of a town or country in a burgess-list, whereby they are recognized as natives of the country, or citizens of the city, and all the privileges of citizenship are secured to them. The book of life contains the list of the righteous and ensures to those whose names are written there, life before God.

To blot out of Jehovah's book, therefore, is to cut off from fellowship with the living God and to deliver over to death. As a true mediator of his people, Moses was ready to stake his own life for the deliverance of the nation.

The word "burgess" used by Keil and Delitzsch is from archaic English and does well to describe the condition of the believer in the heavenly community.

The New Oxford American Dictionary, s.v. "burgess":

burgess: archaic; an inhabitant of a town or borough with full rights of citizenship.

The believer's name is retained in the book of life but that of the unbeliever is blotted out. Moses proposes his eternal separation from God in exchange for the Father's forgiveness of the people's sins. We learn however that for the believer in Jesus Christ his name will never be blotted out from the book of life in:

Luke 10:20 - "... rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

The final verse of our context in Revelation 20 however informs us that unbelievers' names are blotted out from the book of life at physical death:

Revelation 20:15 - And if anyone's name was not found in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- 19- We may conclude from these passages that the book of life chronicles the names of every member of the human race but its registry is being constantly updated.
- 20- Every person is entered into the book of life at the moment of physical birth. This is called *selection*.



- 21- Since God is the only source of life, then it follows that God has a purpose for every person to whom He imputes life.
- 22- God does not have to impute life to anyone. But the fact He does means that life has meaning, purpose, and definition for everyone.
- 23- Consequently, at physical birth, God writes the name of every human being into His book of life.
- 24- This is an act of grace. God grants life to all, but each person must choose to accept God's additional provision of eternal life.
- 25- If, however, a person experiences physical death after having rejected Christ as Savior, his name is blotted out of the book of life because of unbelief.
- 26- This is the fulfillment of elective decree number 4 in the Infralapsarian order: to elect those who believe in Christ and to leave in just condemnation those who do not believe.
- 27- Thus, during human history, names are constantly being added while others are being deleted from the book of life.
- 28- This results in the fact that, at the Great White Throne, the book of life is a registry of believers only, namely the elect.
- 29- By entering every person into the registry of the book of life at physical birth, God is saying that every person has equal privilege and opportunity to accept Christ as Savior and remain in the book.
- 30- We noted earlier from Keil and Delitzsch the development of the term "book of life" from English history. However, the concept obviously goes back to the ancient world when cities kept a registry of all its citizens in what was called a Book of the Living.