

THE BOOK OF LIFE

Exodus 32:31-33

Our text clearly revealed that God is a writer. He writes and inspires or instructs people to write and preserve certain facts for future references. He has a book in which he has written the names of certain people. These people are clearly those who have not sinned against God or living in sin. God's statement, according to the text, is that anyone who sin against Him will have their names erased from the book. He obviously implied that the names of those in the book are names of those who have repented, have forsaken their sin and are subsequently committed to godly and righteous living. *Psalm 69:27-28* revealed that this book is the book of the living. We can also deduce from this reference that as far as God is concerned those living in sin are dead even though they may physically be walking, talking, working and interacting with others (Genesis 3:3, 20:3, Ephesians 2:1).

Furthermore, the inability of anyone to live righteous and acceptable life before God without enablement from Christ is also very clear from the scriptures (Isaiah 64:5, John 15:5, 1 Corinthians 1:30). Power for saintliness and righteous living comes as we repent and forsake our sins and turn to Christ, accepting Him as our Lord and saviour; continuously living under His control, guidance and authority. It is by so doing that we receive eternal life. We have passed from death to life and our names are written in the book of the living or the book of life.

Revelation 20:12-15 clearly revealed that there is a library of books in heaven. One of these books is the book of life. The book excludes the names of those living in sin and are dead spiritually. Death sentence came with man's fall into sin and was passed on to all men who share in Adam's sinful nature and inclination. Jesus came to abolish death (2 Timothy 1:10). He died to atone for sin with His blood. By His blood He abolished death, gives eternal life and empowers those who receive Him to live a new life of freedom from sin. Such people are those whose names are indexed in the book of life. They are the people for whom Christ has gone to prepare a place in heaven. Some of such people who have gone are in heaven now. The book of life contains the name of those who belong to the Lord in life and in death. The book of life is a register of heaven's citizens past, present and future.

We shall consider three subtopics:

1. Indices of life in God's Kingdom
2. Register of Heaven's citizens at home and in Diaspora
3. Continuous update of entries in the book of life

1. Indices of Life in God's Kingdom

Exodus 32:31-33

Freedom from sin, closeness to God, relationship with Christ and righteous living are indices of life and living in God's kingdom. Those bereft of these qualities, virtues and attributes may be walking, talking and interacting with others but the scriptures stated clearly that they are dead. The scriptures make distinction between three kinds of death. A factor common to them all is "*separation*". Physical death is separation of the spirit from the body (James 2:26), spiritual death is separation of man from God (Genesis 3:2) and eternal death or second death is final and permanent separation of those who died in sin from God (Luke 15:25,26). Sinners are dead spiritually and if they die physically without repentance, they shall be permanently and eternally separated from God and from Christ.

True believers don't die. What happen to them which men call death is sleep. Jesus said so. John 11:25-26. Believers' death Jesus described as sleep. John 11:11-13. The apostles did the same (Acts 7:60, 1 Corinthians 15:6, 18, 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 15, 2 Peter 3:4). Eternal life, the life of God is incorporated into man's spirit immediately after repentance and conversion to Christ (John 5:24). It is sustained and maintained by commitment to godliness and righteous living (Psalms 69:26-28, Exodus 32:31-33). God is not a God to the dead. He is God of the living (Mathew 22:31-32). Adam and Eve's death after their disobedience to God is explained by the fact that they were driven out of God's presence and denied access to the fruit of the tree of life. The same fate awaits those who rejected reject the call to repentance and die in sin. It is also the fate of those who claim to be Christian but are living sinful wicked corrupt, unrighteous lives.

2. Register of Heaven's citizens at home and in Diaspora

Exodus 32:31-33

The book of life is a register of names of those who have passed from death to life by forsaking their sins and accepting Christ as their Lord and saviour. It is a register of genuine believers, children of God and citizens of heaven. Some of them have gone and are presently in heaven, while many are still alive here

on earth. Examples of those in heaven as clearly revealed by Bible references include Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, Enoch and many others (Mathew 22:31-32, Revelation 6:9-11)

Those of us who are alive here on earth are heaven's citizens in Diaspora. This world is not our home country. We are strangers and pilgrims on earth (1Peter 2:11). We are ambassadors of Christ and are here on assignment for God. Our assignment in line with the Great Commission is to encourage as many as possible to join us and come into His kingdom and prepare to live with Him eternally in heaven.

Today, we may not know everyone whose names are in the book or register but the Lord knows them and enjoins them to live in freedom from sin so their names will not be erased from the book of life (2 Timothy 2:19).

3. Continuous update of entries in the book of life

Exodus 32:31-33

Registers are created by people, communities and nations on earth to keep track and records of their citizens, allocate land and properties as well as share resources or other privileges. We are familiar with Birth registration as well as that of those who died in the nations of the world. In earthly register, the names and details of those who have died as well as those who behaved irresponsibly and are expelled are erased from government records and entries. Communities, societies, associations, institutions on earth including churches excommunicate, disavow and banish troublemakers and pernicious pestilent fellows. Such people forfeit their rights and privileges as well as their inheritance. It should therefore not surprise anyone that God threatened to expunge the names of those who sin against Him from the book of life.

Freedom from sin and righteous living are therefore fundamental to ensure that our names remain in the book of life. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord Hebrews 12:14