

Being an Overcomer #9

Church of Sardis, continued

All we have left from our study of the message to Sardis is a promise

2. 3:5 – "... 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."

There is a book of life – that is, a book in which are inscribed the names of all God's people.

Ps. 69:28 – In David's complaints against his enemies, he asks that they would be "blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous". (sepher chayyim = "book of life")

Phl. 4:3 – Paul speaks of his fellow labourers, that their names are in the book of life.

Rev. 3:5 – the names of overcomers will not be blotted out of the book

Rev. 13:8 – the names of those who worship the beast (Antichrist) are not in the book.

Rev. 17:8 – those still upon earth will be in wonder at the Antichrist, whose names are not in the book of life from the foundation of the world

Rev. 20:12 – all the dead, small and great, stand before God and are judged out of "the books". Besides books of works, another book was opened, the book of life.

Rev. 20:15 – all whose names are not in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire (Gehenna, Hell)

Rev. 21:27 – no one will enter the holy city, the new Jerusalem, but those whose names are in the Lamb's book of life

Rev. 22:19 – for those who "take away from the words of the book of this prophecy" (the book of Revelation), God will remove them from the book of life and they will never enter the holy city and all its blessings

Also, Lk. 10:20, Dan. 12:1, Mal. 3:16, Heb. 12:22-23, Ex. 32:31-33. These verses don't actually say "book of life" but describe how our names and deeds are recorded in heaven

Lessons/Observations:

1. God writes the names of his people, the "righteous ones", in a book. (Ps. 68:29, ...)
2. Those names were written at "the foundation of the world". (Rev. 17:8)
3. We can have faith that our names are in the book, even though we haven't seen it. (Phl. 4:3)
4. It is possible for one's name to be blotted out of the book. (3:5, 22:19)
5. We can keep our names from being blotted out by overcoming. (though we know that in actuality it is God that preserves us and keeps us from falling) (3:5)
6. Those whose names are not in the book of life will inevitably worship the Antichrist and be eternally lost. (13:8, 17:8)
7. That the final judgment will be based on the names in the book – those whose names are there will enter the heavenly city, the others will be cast into Hell. (20:15, 21:27)

Church #6: Philadelphia

Rev. 3:7-13

Jesus describes himself as “he that is holy, he that is true; he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.”

Commendations:

1. 3:8 - they have “a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” God is not concerned so much with how much we actually get done, as in what we do with what he gives us. He is glorified more by the widow’s mite than with the riches of the wealthy. Simple obedience from a “mustard seed” of faith is better than the religious acts of church leaders. Obedience to what you know is better than having great knowledge but not living up to it.
2. 3:9 – it is implied that they have endured the taunts and rejections of false religious people
3. 3:10 –They have kept the word of his patience (endurance). Endurance through all the trials of life is how we can know our names are in the book of life. We can see that he is preserving us in the way. Mt. 24:12-13

Warning:

3:11 – “Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

Promises:

1. 3:8 – God will give them “an open door”, that no one can close. This could mean opportunity, deliverance, or even the rapture itself, but if God gives you an open door, he expects you to go through it, by faith.
2. 3:9 – Others will (eventually) have to acknowledge that these people are beloved of God.
3. 3:10 – Jesus will “keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” I believe this means that overcoming believers will be raptured away from this world, “caught up together with Christ in the clouds”, and so preserved from the Great Tribulation (a 7-year period of horrific judgments upon the earth, spoken of in Rev. 4 – 19).
4. 3:11 – they have a crown, the symbol of reigning and ruling. We shall rule with Christ on the earth (Rev. 1:6, 5:9-10, 20:4)
5. 3:12 – “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out”. What greater glory and privilege could there be than to be always in God’s presence?
6. 3:12 – “and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God (the new Jerusalem) ... and I will write upon him my new name.”