



GOD'S BOOKKEEPING

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Good morning to you. Welcome to Let the Bible Speak. I hope you had a good week and are to begin a new one by looking into the word of God. The bible is a collection of 66 books inspired by the Holy Spirit. We should be very concerned about those books and the things written in them. But did you know there are other books in God's heavenly library today? And those books should concern and interest us as well.

For a starting point, I would like us to read together from Revelation 20, verses 11 and 12. The veil of the future is lifted back for the apostle John as he is given the revelation of Jesus Christ and he views this ominous scene. ***"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."***

In this chilling view of the judgment of mankind John pictures what He saw as a righteous judge upon a pure and perfect throne judging those who once lived on earth. For any judge to adjudicate any case, there must be a standard against which the defendant is tried. In this case, John says books were brought to the Judge and they were opened. What were these books? What did they have to do with those standing before the throne? And they are not the only books that bible indicates God keeps in heaven pertaining to us. I want to peruse God's books for a few minutes today and see some things about God's meticulous bookkeeping; things that should sober us as well as comfort us.

The writing of books is, of course, an ancient practice. When we explore the Old and New Testament scriptures, we find that God has employed writing as not only a means of communication with man but of recording important things in the history of His people.

For example, Genesis 5:1 introduces the genealogy of the sons of Adam by calling it “the book of the generations of Adam”, simply indicating a record of those who were born from Adam down through the line of his son Seth. This was important to document the unfolding of God’s seed promise. Likewise, we read in Matthew 1:1 of the “Book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, which traces the promised seed from Abraham to the birth of our Lord. We read several times in the Old Testament about the Book of the Law. This was a book Moses wrote containing the law God gave to Israel and it was kept with the Ark of the Covenant, according to Deuteronomy 31. We read of books containing the events and deeds of the Israelites that were recorded so that they might be documented and remembered.

Now, it’s not that God needs a book to remember things but rather, God wanted certain things documented for the benefit of His people. God is omniscient – we are not. God remembers everything – we don’t. God did not need a written family tree of His people – but He recorded such so that WE might know Jesus is the promised seed and the Christ of God. God didn’t need Moses to write the law down in a book to remember what He commanded but rather, so that WE might remember! The same goes for the history of His dealings with man. God has no trouble remembering. He knows everything, he remembers everything, and He sees from the beginning to the end and the inside to the outside of every person and every event that has ever taken place. He is not constricted by linear time like we are. But He uses this powerful imagery to impress upon us His omniscience... that there is nothing hidden from His sight and nothing that is impossible for His mind to know and perfectly retain. That can be quite terrifying AND it can be very comforting. I want us to think together about the interesting references in the bible to God’s various books – His perfect record! He is a meticulous and unerring bookkeeper, and we need to keep that in mind as we go through life. God’s keeps these books for a reason, and we will be confronted with each of them at one point or another.

First, there are the books containing God’s revelation to man. We would call these collected books “the bible”. Of course, the bible is a treasury of 66 books all written at various points in the stream of time, inspired by the Holy Spirit and all serving a unique purpose in God’s overall revelation to man. These books were not haphazardly written by fallible and forgetful men but were meticulously written down with the Holy Spirit’s approval and guidance. Men have tried to corrupt it, but the bible as God inspired it is a perfect revelation of the mind and will of God to man. Peter tells us that the prophets who wrote the Old Testament spoke as they were “moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21) which means as they were ‘bourn along’ by the Spirit of God. The Spirit carefully oversaw and approved every word they wrote. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16 that “ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God...” The word inspiration means “breath”. In other words, every scripture is the breath of God – or it is what God Himself spoke through those inspired by His Spirit. Well, that of course gives the scriptures authority.

First, we can absolutely know everything about God that God wants us to know about Him and His character. Through God’s revelation, the bible, we can learn of the love of God, the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, the wrath of God, and so on... We can not only know of His person, but we can also know all His pronouncements. God’s commandments and His will are revealed to us in the bible. The Jews of Old had the Book of the Law and later, the other Old Testament books recording God’s laws and His instructions for them. Likewise, through the apostles and first century prophets, we have the New Testament scriptures which reveal to us the will of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and our King – the Head of the church. And not only His person and His pronouncements, but also His promises! God has made thrilling promises to His people but also warnings to the wicked and God never breaks His promises, and they are recorded in the books – His word -- to assure us and to stand as a testament to the fact that God will do what He said He would do.

Now, the bible itself tells us that those books are complete and sufficient. They are lacking nothing and before the last apostle laid down His inspired pen, the Holy Spirit moved Him to write this warning in Revelation 22:18-19 "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Now, friend, that's serious business. If someone tells you they have some new revelation from the Lord, you run the other way. If they lead you in some direction other than what the bible says, they are a false prophet and a false teacher. Jude said in Jude 3 that the faith was "once for all delivered to the saints."

In Revelation 20, John is transported by the Spirit of God to that ominous judgment scene at the end of time. He said ALL the dead small and great were there standing before the throne. Not some of them – ALL of them. Paul said that we must "all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." That means me; that means you; that means your parents; your children; your neighbors; those who lived ages ago; and those who perhaps are yet to be born. All will stand before the Lord, and he says, "the books were opened." Most certainly, in that vision, John is seeing the books containing God's word because the bible tells us time and again that we will be judged by that word! Jesus said in John 12:48 that the word that I have spoken (while on earth recorded by the gospel writers and those He spoke from heaven through His apostles) – "the word that I have spoken, it will judge him in the last day."

Friend, I want you to give that some serious consideration right now. We will be judged by the word of God. God's word is immutable. Jesus said, "heaven and earth will pass away but my words WILL NOT pass away." You aren't going to be judged by the prevailing voices of your culture. You're not going to be judged by the United States Constitution or by the laws passed by congress. That law by which you will be judged does not have to pass through the U.S. Supreme Court. The real Supreme Court is in heaven and there's one judge on that bench and He upholds His constitution, not one written by a congress. Is the bible your rule for living? Is it your standard of conduct? Is it where you turn for all your doctrine in faith, worship, and Christian service? Is it ultimate arbiter between right and wrong? Because you're not going to be judged by your conscience or your feelings or your opinion. The BOOKS are going to be opened and those books and the truth they contain have not changed with the times or with the ages. When Moses wrote down the Law given to govern Old Testament Israel, Moses handed that book to the Levite priests in Deuteronomy 31:26 and told them to "Take this Book of the Law and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you." And the words of Jesus Christ and His apostles are written down in heaven and one day they will be opened at the judgment bar, and they will witness against the rebellious and disobedient.

And then there's what we might call the book of RECORD. The book in which is recorded our lives – our words – our thoughts – our deeds. Now, God doesn't need a literal book to know and remember everything about us – but this sobering picture should impress upon us that nothing escapes the all-seeing eyes or the memory of God. The bible says in Hebrews 4:13 that "there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Revelation 20:12 says that the dead will be judged "by their works according to the things written in the books." Which works? Well, every single things we have ever done. 2 Corinthians 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." God will remember every word we ever said. The recording device is always rolling in heaven. Jesus once said, "For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment." (Matthew 12:36) He even knows and makes note of

every thought we choose to entertain – every motive – every secret lust – every flash of jealousy and pride...every motive whether pure or impure or selfish. 1 Corinthians 4:5 says that when the Lord comes, he “will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal (or expose) the counsels (or motives) of the hearts...”

God won't just remember the highlights or the “big things”. There is not one sliver of a word, thought, or deed that escapes the infinite mind of God and is not recorded. That's bad news for many and it's good news for others. That should terrify every person who is wantonly and flippantly living in sin. You will answer for EVERY... SINGLE... SIN before God except for one thing! You can come to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world; place your trust in Him; surrender your will to Him in repentance; confess your allegiance to Him as your Master and Lord; and be buried with Him in baptism so that your sins can be washed away in the crimson stream of His cleansing blood. (Acts 22:16). And listen to how Peter put it in Acts 3:19 “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...” There's a record of sin's debt. And only by the merit of Christ's atoning blood can that sin ever be erased.

Friend, don't get this idea that God just looks at the general overall picture and doesn't care about the specifics. Don't skate through life thinking “my sins aren't too bad, and God doesn't pay any attention.” He records every sin, every righteous deed left undone; every impure desire; every muttered word no matter how hushed the tone in which we speak it. And every sin that is not buried beneath the blood of Jesus will be exposed and replayed for the court of heaven in that day! There is a Day of Judgment and you'd best be preparing for it.

But just as God records every sin – he records every righteous act. He remembers our labor. Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15 that our labor in the Lord will not be in vain. That doesn't mean we can somehow earn our salvation, but it does mean that the Lord is faithful to reward righteous deeds done in His name. He remembers the times we were abused and unjustly and cruelly treated for He said in Hebrews 12 ‘vengeance is mine (not ours) ...HE will repay...’ He even records our sorrows, disappointments, heartaches, and bitter tears. There's a beautiful passage in Psalms 56:8 written by David when jealous and wicked Saul was seeking his life. David was being chased across the wilderness mountains and hiding from cave to cave and his tears fell like rain. And one day, he looked up to heaven, and said “You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?” Isn't that wonderful? Just to think that God has a book in heaven where he records every time one of His children is made to cry. One day, the cause of all those tears is going to be gone forever and John said in Revelation 21 that one day, God Himself will wipe those tears from our eye. I think within that is included the idea that God will set every wrong right and remember and redeem every righteous tear we shed in this Christian life.

And finally, there is God's BOOK OF LIFE. This book is spoken of time and time again all throughout the bible, and it's a thrilling yet a sobering thought. Again Revelation 20:12, John saw in the Day of Judgment that “another book was opened, which is the Book of Life...” Jesus talked about that book while He lived on earth. He told His disciples not to rejoice over miracles being performed but rather to rejoice that their names are “written in heaven”. (Luke 10:20)

Paul said in Philippians 4:3 “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.” You see, there’s a book in heaven where the name of every person who has been saved has been recorded. Did you ever stop to think that your name is eternal? It is! You’ll always have that name. And the moment you come in faith and repentance and confess the Christ and are united with Him in baptism, your name is written there. What an awesome and a precious thought! God does not write your name there without you knowing it either. It doesn’t appear there by chance. It is written there when enter a saving relationship with Jesus Christ in obedience to His gospel plan of salvation. Is your name there today? How do you know? DO you know? It can be!

One day, the bible assures us that book is going to be searched. Someone will search it for your name. When you come to the judgment after this life, your name will be called, and that book will be searched. And the most terrifying, dreadful, awful things I can imagine is for your name to not be found there. You say, “why’s that so important?” Because Revelation 20:15 goes on to say, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” That’s what the future holds for every person who turns Christ away. Revelation 21:27 But there shall by no means enter (the New Jerusalem) anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. And I want to tell you something else... it’s possible to have your name TAKEN OUT of that book! I know many people will tell you that’s not the case... but they’re in direct contradiction with the word of God. Revelation 3:5 says, “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.” But what about the person who doesn’t overcome? What of the person who turns away from Christ and goes back to the world and never repents – never returns?

Even long, long ago Moses came down from trembling, smoking Mount Saini to find the people worshipping the golden calf, Exodus 32:31-33 says, “Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written." And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.” Where do you stand today? If today were to be the Day of all days and you were summoned to the throne of judgment, and that book be opened, would your name be found? There will be mistakes; no accidental omissions; no last-minute additions... God’s bookkeeping is perfect, and it is meticulous, and we will be judged by the things written in those books. Come to Christ today, won’t you. Give Him your life in gospel obedience – be baptized and have your sins washed away. If you’ve deserted the faith and left the Lord in rebellion, come home so your name will be found written on the pages of that book.

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