

Exod 04-08-29b

Let's continue our study now in Exodus. I read you a section where Moses is meeting with the Lord in chapter 33, but I want to go back to the first meeting that Moses has with God after grinding the calf to powder, scattering it in the water, and causing the children of Israel to drink it. After the slaughter of the 3,000 recalcitrant, disobedient, defiant leaders, by the way, I don't know if I mentioned this last time or not, but it seems not only possible but likely that included in this 3,000 that are slaughtered at the doorways of the tents are most, if not all, of the 70 elders who went up the mountain and ate the meal in the presence of God.

Because these who stand at the threshold, the tribal leader, the clan leader, the family leader is not going to sit in the tent and send his third son Ahab to go stand in the threshold of the tent. If he's the leader, if he's the head, he's going to stand there. He is the representative.

Standing in the doorway is representation. This is why the blood at the Passover was put on the lintel on the doorway. This is where your house is represented.

This is where your statement is made, is at the doorway. It's why God told the Israelites to put His law in the doorway. You have these little scrolls that are actually put in.

Jews are great for taking things literally. When God says bind them on your hand and on your forehead, they have the phylacteries. They have these little, I can't remember the name of it, something like tegilot, that are these little scrolls that are put in compartments in the physical doorway of observant Jewish households.

There's a little compartment there and you push a little door aside and there's this little tiny scroll in there. But the doorway is the place of representation. It is the place of statement.

Where does your household stand? Well, these 3,000 are killed by the Levites when Moses says, whoever is on the Lord's side, to me. The Levites come and the others do not. So who do you think is standing in the doorways of these tents getting killed? I think it is not an unsound deduction to conclude that some, if not all, of those 70 elders who saw God and ate in His presence and ratified the covenant die on this day.

Which is why we are going to need a fresh statement of covenant, a fresh ratification of covenant, which is what is about to take place here in these next couple of chapters. Let every man, this is Exodus 32, 27, let every man put his sword on his side, go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp. Let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, every man his neighbor.

Now this is a harsh piece of scripture. This is a harsh principle when it comes to application. Because it tells us that after time goes by, even someone who is close to us, even someone who is in our family, if they repeatedly and consistently show a defiant attitude toward God, we have to separate.

Jesus said, I have not come to bring peace but a sword. And that sword is going to divide households. And it isn't something we do hastily.

It isn't something we do easily. It isn't something that we do incautiously. But there is a time to put distance between ourselves and those who are openly and defiantly against God and the things of God.

You just cannot move ahead if it's like a sack race. You know, they used to have the sack race. You put one leg in a potato sack.

Your partner puts their leg in the potato sack. And then you run down and try to run the race and win. Well, if somebody is not running, you've got to get out of that sack.

You've got to get out of that sack race with somebody who is not going to move or you're going to inevitably be dragged down with them. Moses said, Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord so that He may bestow on you a blessing this day. And you think this day of all days in the history of Israel would be the most difficult for God to bless anybody because there is human blood on their swords and it is the blood of their fellow Israelites, their brothers, the ones that they were delivered with, the ones they walked across the Red Sea with, the ones that they have gathered manna with, the ones that they have sojourned in the wilderness and survived dangers from armies.

And here they are at the foot of God's mountain with the glory cloud, and they're entering into covenant with God. And some of these men have gone up the mountain and have eaten this consecration meal in the presence of God, and now they say, Kill them. And then Moses says, Consecrate yourself.

When we looked at that word consecrate last time and what it means, so that He may bestow on you a blessing this day. Consecrate means literally fill your hand. That's the phrase.

The word Yad is right there. And the verb with the noun Yad or hand means fill your hand. And this is the idea, fill your hand with a sacrifice.

You have something that you're bringing to God. He says, Fill your hand, consecrate yourself. I always think about John Wayne, you know, Fill your hands, and then he comes riding across the field there in true grit.

But that's exactly and literally what consecrate, and anytime you find it in connection with the priests here in Exodus and Leviticus where it says, Consecrate Aaron and his sons, this is the phrase, Fill the hands, so that He may bestow on you a blessing this day. And this to me ties in with what we saw in Proverbs 3. God has given us something with which to fill our hand. We have been given the means of offering this sacrifice.

We present ourselves a living sacrifice. What is it that consecrates us? What is it that cleanses us and makes us whole? It is the eternal, living, and powerful Word of God. That is what divides us

asunder.

What did the priest do with the sacrificial animal? Divided them asunder to the joints and the marrow, right? That's what the Word of God does for us. The Word of God prepares us as that living sacrifice. One of the things you find out when you cut an animal open, it may look perfect on the outside, when you cut it open, you find out whether or not it's perfect on the inside.

And that's what God's Word does for us. We go beyond the externals of the superficial appearance of these sacrificial animals. It goes right to the very heart.

So that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, although every man has opposed his son and his brother. It came to pass on the next day, Moses said to the people, You have committed a great sin, so now I will go up to the Lord. Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.

What does this tell us? This sin, this corporate sin on the part of the nation, requires some sort of atonement. Moses says, I've got to go find out what we have to do to solve this problem between the people of Israel and the Lord God. Remember one of our fundamental rules of Bible study? The nation of Israel in the Old Testament is an analogy, is representative of the individual believer in the church age.

What does this tell us? If we as individuals commit a sin, there is some sort of atonement that needs to be claimed, that needs to be implemented. Something needs to be in the hand to go before God and make this right. Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.

Now, can Moses make atonement for their sin? Can he offer himself as a substitutionary atoning sacrifice? He is going to try. Watch. Verse 31.

Moses returned to the Lord. So, you remember the sequence now. Moses went up, left Joshua halfway up.

He goes up. He is getting the tables of the law and all the other instructions for the building of the tabernacle. God says, go down.

The people have corrupted themselves. He goes down. Collects Joshua.

Gets to the foot of the mountain. Breaks the stones. Does the whole golden calf disposition.

Talks to Aaron. Three thousand are slain. Now he goes back up the mountain.

He returned to the Lord and said, Oh, these people have committed a great sin. They have made for themselves a God of gold. Yet now, if you will forgive their sin, what are you going to put on the table? The Lord, if you will forgive their sin, what? Well, there is nothing.

Moses can't offer anything. He can't promise anything. If you will forgive their sin.

And that dash in your Bible is exactly a reflection of the construction in Hebrew. It starts and it

just doesn't finish. I would have started a new verse right after that dash.

Yet now, if you will forgive their sin, and now we need a new verse because it just breaks off. There is no finish to that start. There is no apodosis for that prodesis.

If you will forgive their sin. And then he says, But if not, I pray, blot me out of your book which you have written. Now, what book is this? How does Moses know there is a book? We had a good suggestion made during the break that because God spoke to Moses, maybe he got some of the information that is in Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy that would not be a part of family records, something beyond these are the generations of.

Some kind of way, Moses knows that there is a book. We are not told that in Genesis. We are not told that anywhere except as an assumed point of fact.

Moses says, If you will not forgive their sin, I ask you to blot me out of your book which you have written. But what kind of a book is it? We get one clue from the next verse. The Lord said to Moses, Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book.

Well, now, who has sinned against God? I think we have Romans 3.23 or something. What does it say? All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. So who is going to get blotted out of the book? Everybody.

Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book. Now, is Moses blotted out of the book? If he is, then there is no point in offering to be blotted out if you are already blotted out. Has Moses sinned against the Lord? Well, let's see.

I believe he is guilty of murder. I believe he almost got slain for failing to circumcise his sons. Is Moses going to commit future sins? I think so.

I think one of them is going to keep him from going into the land. What does this mean? Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book. Well, we want to take a look at this because the Bible has some things to say about books.

What is the first thing you think of when you think about God's books? Think about the book of life, right? We have the book of life, the Lamb's book of life. We know about this from other passages. Let's take a look and see exactly what is going on here with this book.

The idea of being blotted out of a book, one of the first things we need to straighten out here is whether or not this is the book of the saved. The Bible teaches explicitly, and we have studied in other times and places, the inviolability, the absolute nature of salvation. And we are not going to go back through that study this morning.

The Bible clearly teaches, without any doubt, the only people who doubt this are people who have not done their homework in the word of God. Once you are saved, you are always saved. You cannot lose your salvation.

It is a birth into a family. You cannot be unborn. Nicodemus said, Lord, have I got to crawl up in my mother and be born again? Jesus said, it is ridiculous.

Once you are born, you are born. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

You don't get born of the Spirit and then become an unspirit. Spirit is eternal. Spirit is forever.

All of the angels are going to last forever. All of the human beings are going to last forever. And Jesus said, salvation is being born of the Spirit.

And once you are born of the Spirit, you are born. You don't get unborn. You say, well, but people get born physically and then they die.

Can't you die spiritually after you are born? No, you can't. Because the gift of God is eternal life. We are sons.

We are in Christ in this dispensation. And the Lord Jesus doesn't have leprosy. The Lord Jesus doesn't have eczema or seborrhea or psoriasis.

He doesn't have some sort of a bodily defect where he has parts of his body that suddenly fall off. He doesn't have frostbite. He doesn't have amputation.

In this age, if you believe in Him, if you receive Him, you have the right to be called a son of God. And that does not change. Even if we are faithless, He remains faithful.

He cannot deny Himself. So without going through that whole study, once saved, always saved. So, if there is a book that lists the people who are saved, there is no blotting out of that book.

You just don't blot people out that are in. People say, well, here is how it works. God started with a book that has everybody in it.

And if you die without faith, you are blotted out. There is not a shred of scripture that says anything about everybody being in the book and getting blotted out when they die without faith. Nice idea.

No support. No scripture. There is a book in which Moses name is written.

That is as much as we know from this passage. And Moses says, blot me out of your book if you are not going to forgive the sin of the people. This cannot be a specious thing.

This is a fruitless argument if it is not possible. Do you think Moses knows the nature of salvation? Does he know whether or not he has eternal life? Can he put his eternal life on the line and say, Lord, take away my eternal life if you are not going to forgive the sins of the people? I suppose it is possible. But God says, no.

He says, whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book. Now this clarifies the

picture. God says, the ones who have sinned, I will blot them out of my book.

So this is a book of people who have not sinned. In some sense. If all have sinned, then what are we talking about? We just keep running in circles here.

Let's take a look at some of the other passages that talk about the book and see if we get some light shed on this. Take a look first in Exodus chapter 17 and verse 14. Exodus 17, 14.

Joshua defeated the Amalekites and his people with the edge of the sword. The Lord said to Moses, write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. What does this tell us? There are books, plural, that God keeps.

There is more than one book. You have the idea of things being blotted out. That means there is no more remembrance.

What does it mean to be blotted out? No remembrance. No recognition. No acknowledgement.

So what is the concept of blotting out in the book of Exodus? If you blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven, no remembrance, no acknowledgement, no honor, no glory, no footnote, nothing. Blotted out from under heaven. Deuteronomy 29 and 20.

The anger of the Lord and his jealousy will burn against a man who is disobedient. Every curse that is written in the book settles on him. The Lord will blot out his name from under heaven.

The Lord will separate him from all the tribes of Israel for adversity according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law. So that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, the foreigner, will say when they see the plagues of the land, the whole land is brimstone salt and so on. The nations in verse 24.

Why has the Lord done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean? The people say because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went and served other gods, worshipped them gods they did not know, that he did not give to them. The anger of the Lord was aroused against this land.

Verse 27. To bring on it every curse that is written in this book. And the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath and in great indignation and cast them into another land as it is this day.

The secret things belong to the Lord our God. Those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever that we may do all the words of this law. Being blotted out is contingent upon obedience or the lack thereof.

The disobedient are blotted out. These who are under the covenant... Does God make covenants with unbelievers? Do we have any examples? Only those that people sort of self-

define. They say, well, God made a covenant with Cain.

Well, yes, and I would argue Cain is a believer. God talks to him face to face. God tells him if he will do well, he is justified.

He offers a sacrifice to God. If you don't believe in God, what are you busy offering a sacrifice to him for? If you are godless, don't fear God, don't care about God, what are you doing taking your tossed salad up there to offer to him? Cain is a believer. God makes a covenant with Cain and says, I will let no one slay you.

Here is a marker on your head to protect you. Cain is a believer. God makes covenants with believers.

God speaks to believers. God is speaking to these people. They enter into covenant.

Verse 14, I make this covenant and this oath not with you alone, but with him who stands here with us this day before the Lord our God. This is talking about believers. The Lord our God.

We dwelt in the land of Egypt. We saw their abominations. There may not be among you a man or woman whose heart turns away today from the Lord our God.

If your heart turns away, what does that mean? It started out being there and now it turns away. It doesn't say who has a heart that never comes to God or a heart that refuses to come to God. It says a heart that turns away.

My son, forget not my law. So it may happen when he hears the words of this curse, he blesses himself in his heart saying, I shall have peace even though I follow the dictates of my heart. How does that stack up with Proverbs chapter 3? Can you have peace if you follow the dictates of your own heart? You cannot.

There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked. The Lord will not spare him. The anger of the Lord and his jealousy burn against that man.

Every curse written in this book settles on him. And the Lord would blot out his name from under heaven. You get the idea that this is first and foremost talking about physical death.

But the blotting out is contingent upon behavior. Amalek is blotted out for his behavior. This man is blotted out for his behavior.

It is a performance based judgment being blotted out. It is what you do that gets you blotted out from under heaven. It gets you blotted out from remembrance.

It gets you blotted out of a book. If you go now to Psalm chapter 9 and verse 5, David says, You have rebuked the nations. You have destroyed the wicked.

You have blotted out their name forever and ever. Same idea. Because of what they have done,

they are blotted out.

Revelation chapter 3 and verse 5. He who overcomes will be clothed in white garments, and I will not erase his name from the book of life. But I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. So, the book in Revelation chapter 3, that has the names, at least in this context, of church age believers at a minimum, God says, I will not erase his name from the book of life.

If this is a reward, is it possible for a name to be blotted out of this book? Yes, it is. Because the promise is, it is a specious promise if nobody gets blotted out of the book. What is the point of being an overcomer? God says, I will not blot your name out of my book.

Well, nobody gets their name blotted out of the book, so it is an empty promise. It is only a promise. It only means something if it is possible to happen.

There are people whose names are erased from the book of life. Now, would this be the book of the living that David talks about? Lord, do not blot my name out of the book of the living. The book of the living, this is more the idea of the nations, of the man who comes under God's curse, that we just read about in Deuteronomy.

Sin unto death. There is a book of people who are currently alive on the earth. Some angel says, well, is Oholiab still alive? But look, he is written in the book of the living.

He is still operating. His warranty has not expired. He has not passed the EOL.

He is still there. He has not been taken out of the game. This book in Revelation 3.5 is different.

He who overcomes will be clothed in white garments. Not everybody is clothed in white garments. You have to have a white garment to stay in the feasting hall, the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Somebody without the white garment gets cast out. I will not erase his name from the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

Does every believer get their name confessed before the Father? No. At an awards assembly, well, maybe they do now, but in the old days at an awards assembly, you don't troop the entire population of the school up onto the platform there, do you? It is meaningless if everybody gets an award. An award, a reward, are for those who stand out, who are exceptional, who do something that is noteworthy.

They don't hand out ribbons to military men for showing up for formation. You are supposed to be there. It is when you excel.

It is above and beyond the call. It is when you stand out as an exception. For this, Jesus says, I will not erase his name from the book of life.

I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. Well, what does it mean, the book of life? This is really what we are focusing on here. In Philippians 4.3, Paul says, True companion, I ask you to help these women who have shared my struggle in connection with the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life.

These who have shared my struggle in the gospel, my fellow workers who have gone above and beyond, whose names are in the book of life. Now, this is kind of a goofy thing for Paul to say if all of the Christians in the church are in the book of life. He says, true companion, I ask you to help these women, these specific people he has mentioned in the preceding context, who have shared my struggle in the gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life.

This is a book of the overcomers. This is a book of the faithful, those who steer a course down the straight path and get through that narrow gate that leads to what? Life. This is life in the sense of quality.

This is life in the sense of fruitfulness. Indeed, the word zoe, the Greek word for life, when it was originally in use in the 8th century B.C., was used by Homer and authors of that ilk to talk about life in the sense of real living. There is another word in Greek for life.

Bios, B-I-O-S. We talk about biology, that's theology of bios. That's the knowledge of life.

It's information about living things, biology. Bios is life in the sense of existence. Zoe is life in the sense of its quality.

Real life. In fact, there is even an author that talked about, in fact, the Apostle Paul. Not only secular Greek authors, but the Apostle Paul.

Write this down if you get no other scripture. 1 Timothy 6.19 Paul is talking about those who Timothy preaches to. He says, instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future.

Now listen to that again. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, to be ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. Zoe Aleithinos.

True life. That which is life indeed. You take hold of life.

You take hold of Zoe in this expression of faith and obedience. The book of life is the book of productivity. It is the book of righteousness by faith.

It is the book of the narrow road travelers. That's the book of life. Paul says, I could wish myself accursed from Christ for the sake of my brethren, the Israelites.

What is he saying? Accursed from Christ. He's saying, Lord, if I could bring Israel into the fold, you could take me out of the book of life. I would sacrifice all of my future rewards.

He's not saying throw me in the lake of fire. He's not saying I don't need my salvation. Paul is saying the very same thing in the New Testament that Moses says in the Old.

I could wish myself accursed. This is what he tells the Galatians. You who come back under the law, you've fallen from grace, you're cut off from Christ.

What's he saying? You've lost every shred of opportunity for inheritance. You're going to be sitting outside on the banks of the lake of fire, roasting weenies over your inheritance. Because that's where it's going to be.

Outside are the dogs and the fornicators and the liars, whose part is in the lake of fire that burns forever and ever. The lake of fire is the second death. What is the promise to the overcomers in Revelation 2 and 3? One of them is, you will not be hurt by the second death.

What does the second death do to your inheritance? If you're faithless, if you're disobedient? Roasts it. All you get is smoke. You don't even get entrance to the city.

You sit outside with all the rest of the people who are still guilty of their sin. What does God say? Who is He going to blot out of His book? All those who have sinned. Well, all have sinned, so how can there be a book of people who have not sinned? Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. David says, I will stand before God in my integrity. The man of Uriah and Bathsheba fame, the man of numbering the people fame, the man of I can't control my son Absalom fame, the man of great mistakes, the man of spit running down his beard fame.

But, he says, I will stand before God in my righteousness, in my integrity. How can he say that? We are washed. We are sanctified.

We are purified, just like we sang about it this morning, in the blood of Christ. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. You can be in the book, if you claim the cleansing grace of God in Christ.

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. A healthy believer, regularly cleanses himself in the fount, and remains in the book. People who quit thinking about God, quit thinking about the issue of sin, had that stuff accumulate.

God says, your sins are still next to your name here. No judicial penalty, that's been paid. No propitiation necessary, that has been made.

But, these sins are still on your books, because you have not submitted yourself to the mighty hand of God. You have not cleansed yourself in the blood of the Lamb. You have trampled

underfoot the blood of the covenant, by which you are sanctified.

Remember that? Those who trample underfoot the Son of God, and put into an open shame, who treat as a common thing, the blood by which we are sanctified. It's unimportant. I don't need to worry about it.

I don't need to do it. This is an essential part of our life, to keep ourselves clean, to be sanctified, to fill our hand, consecrate yourself to God. We have to do this, if we want to stay in the book.

God says, I brought people out of my book, who the charge of sin against them remains. They have not gotten cleansed. You don't go to the golden calf, and get your sins removed.

You come to God. You come in faith. You say to God, like David, against thee and thee only have I sinned.

That's what this book is. If you didn't get no other passage, be sure you get 1 Timothy 6.19. Those who do good, are rich in good works, are generous and ready to share, what is this? It's love. It's the fruit of faith and hope.

Storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. Taking hold of real life is dependent on obedience and faith. You do not take hold of life simply by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not this life. Not this life. Not book of life, life.

Book of life is the book of inheritance. It is the book of the inheritors. It is the roster of those who have that bequest, who have that part, that meros.

Paul says, I would trade my inheritance if Israel could come back to God. Moses says, Lord, blot me out of your book. If there is no atonement for this sin.

Put me in with them. I don't want my rewards. I don't want to walk into the kingdom alone without the nation that you sent me to bring.

I will be a failure. What good will my rewards be if the nation is not forgiven? If you don't fulfill your purpose in them, my rewards will be hollow and empty. Blot me out of your book.

Moses knows fully and exactly what this book is. It is the book of the living. It is not the book of the living in the sense of those on the earth.

It is the book of living in the sense of those who bear fruit and who have an inheritance and a reward from God on that basis. Blot me out of your book. God says, Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book.

Now, therefore, you go, you lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. Behold,

my angel shall go on before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin.

I'll send an angel. I'll lead them where they're supposed to go. But the punishment is coming.

So the Lord plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made. There is ongoing discipline for this sin. Why? The defiant and the rebellious have been slain.

Where is the repentance? Where is the change of mind? Where is the expression? Does it say, And the people wept? Does it say the people went to Moses and said, We have sinned a sin? Moses confesses on their behalf. Just like Jeremiah and Nehemiah and Ezra and some of these guys will confess for national sin. But the nation itself has not confessed.

They are shocked and alarmed and mournful over the death of the 3,000. But as yet, there has been no national repentance. No national change of mind.

And God says, Look, I'll show you who I'm going to blot out. I'm going to blot out the people who have sinned. You go lead the people to the place I've spoken of.

My angels shall go before you. Very common belief that the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is the pre-incarnate Christ. Christophany, they call it.

I do not believe so. We've talked about this earlier in our Exodus study. Here is another passage that supports my belief.

Because Moses is not content to be accompanied by the angel of the Lord. God says, I will send the angel of my presence with you. But Moses says in verse 12 of the next chapter, You say to me, Bring up this people.

But you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, I know you by name. God says in verse 14, My presence will go with you and I will give you rest.

He says, If your presence does not go up with us, do not bring us up from here. Moses says, The angel is not good enough. I don't just want an angel.

I don't want the destroyer to go before us and drive out the enemies. We want you with us. Is the Lord Jesus God enough to accompany Moses and the people in the land? He is.

Moses says here, You notice in New King James they put an angel with a capital A in verse 34 of chapter 32. That's a small a. God says, I'll send Michael. I'll send somebody to accompany you.

I'm not going to go. Moses says, If you don't go, I'm not going. We don't want to go.

It has to be you. It has to be your presence. So I think this is an argument for the fact that the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is not in fact the Lord Jesus.

Otherwise he would be sufficient and that would make a sort of sense for him to go on and be

the deliverer and be the one in whose power they conquer. Well, next time we're going to see Moses in the presence of God. He is going to request to see God's glory and God is going to reveal it.

That is going to take up and occupy the better part of our study next time. But what do we conclude here? It is so important for us to be alerted, to be motivated by what we see here in Israel because the people in Israel think that they are right. As we've seen in some of our other studies here in Acts and in Ezekiel, it is a dangerous thing to not be able to trust the compass in your soul, to have a way that seems right and yet it's not.

To be driving along with no oil in the engine and have no light on the dashboard telling us to not smell the heat, to not see the smoke and to not know that we are rapidly destroying ourselves, it's a dangerous thing. We have to know where we stand. We have to know whether we are in the right and the only way to know that is to evaluate ourselves in the light of God's Word and to accept no substitute.

It isn't enough to look around and everyone agrees. We have to encourage each other to love and good works as they are defined by the Word of God. God's presence has to be with us.

God's Holy Spirit has to be creating in us Christ. Christ formed in us is the hope of glory. This is what Paul says, Christ formed in you the hope of glory.

There is no other hope. There is no way to remain listed in the Book of Life. Let me just close with one suggestion.

We talk about the great white throne judgment and I looked at that again in connection with the Book of Life and the idea of the books being opened and another book which is the Book of Life and I have often wondered why does God open the Book of Life at the judgment at the end of the thousand year millennial kingdom when by definition the only people that are raised at that time are the rest of the dead that haven't been raised in the Old Testament resurrection, haven't been raised in the New Testament resurrection. Why would God open the Book of Life especially in the light of what we've seen about the Book of Life here? I'll tell you why. I believe, and this is something new for me this week, that that final resurrection includes not only all of the unbelieving dead of every age but also the believing dead of the millennial kingdom.

There are those who are found written in the Book of Life. We know from the sheep and goats judgment that Jesus spoke of that at the end of the kingdom the king sitting on his throne will gather all the goats on his left and the sheep on his right. The goats are the unbelievers of every age.

They are not going to be written in the Book of Life which is the book of fruitful good works. He's going to judge the sheep and say, when I was hungry, you gave me to eat. When I was thirsty, you gave me to drink.

When I was sick and in prison, you visited me. When I was naked, you clothed me. Because in

the millennial kingdom your salvation will be evidenced and you will have those good works.

But there is a judgment of both believers and unbelievers at the great white throne. And I think you can make that case from the fact that the Book of Life is opened. Anyone who is not found written in the Book of Life is cast into the lake of fire.

But there are those. Otherwise, where are your millennial believers judged? We know that it is possible to die in the millennium. We know that the spirit is going to be poured out on flesh in the millennium.

There are going to be believers with the spirit in the flesh in the millennium. When is their judgment? I would submit to you it is the great white throne. We'll look at that a little more in the future.

But I give you that as grist for the mill in the days ahead. Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for communicating to us so clearly the criteria by which we will be judged.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts. Help us to remember who we are and why we are here so that we can live in a way that is pleasing in your sight and will glorify the Lord Jesus Christ now and in the ages to come. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.