

# The Book of Life

Sunday, 11/18 – 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 11/19 – 7 PM

26<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 2018

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Today, *as we recall that Bethlehem Lutheran Church was founded 114 years ago*, we focus on [the first part of Daniel chapter 12](#).

Dr. Luther made this comment: *“The twelfth chapter of Daniel... has to do wholly with the Antichrist and with these last times in which we are living”* (AE 35:313) (1423). Today’s brief section is only three verses, yet it describes a time of great trouble before Jesus returns, the final judgment, and how we should proceed between now and then!

1. **Great Trouble:** **1** “At that time *[the end of the world]* **shall arise Michael** *[which means “who is like God” and is most likely the very Son of God]*, **the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time** *[see the People’s Bible Commentary, page 218, third paragraph]*.
  - a. *time of trouble*. Lesser times of trouble have come –  
the when Antiochus Epiphanes (167 B.C.) sacrificed a pig on the altar at the Jerusalem temple and the when Jerusalem fell to the Romans (A.D. 70); *both of those events point ahead to the GREAT TROUBLE before Jesus returns!*
  - b. *since there was a nation till that time*. So when did nations come into existence? Let’s go to Genesis:
    - I. Ch. 1 – The six-day creation account.

- II. Ch. 2 – Creation details; the first wedding; and life before the fall.
- III. Ch. 3 – The fall; promise of the Savior; first blood sacrifice; and clothes.
- IV. Ch. 4 – Cain murders Abel; a list of Cain’s descendants; and cities.
- V. Ch. 5 – The descendants of Adam to Noah (how we date the flood).
- VI. Ch. 6 – Intermarriage between believers and non-believers; the increase of wickedness; the promise of the flood; and the building of the ark.
- VII. Ch. 7 – The worldwide flood.
- VIII. Ch. 8 – The water subsides; Noah offers sacrifices.
- IX. Ch. 9 – God promises to never flood the whole world again, then He set His bow in the cloud as a sign of His promise; Noah’s three sons.
- X. Ch. 10 – The descendants of Noah’s sons; and the first four appearances of the word nations.

**Summary:** The *greatest trouble ever* was the worldwide flood. The greatest trouble *since the nations* will be shortly before Jesus returns!

2. **Final Judgment:** **IC** **But at that time your people** [*those believing in the Messiah, the Christ*] **shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.** // The ones in the book are the ones whom God has **chosen** before creation, **washed** in the blood of the Lamb, and **kept**, *through His Word*, in the one true faith! These are some Bible references to **“the book of life”**:

- a. **Revelation 3:5 ESV** [Jesus to the believers in Sardis:]  
The one who conquers [*who, by God's grace, continues to believe in Me to the end*]... I will never blot his name out of **the book of life** [*Matt. 10:22*].
- b. **Revelation 13:8 ESV** ...and all who dwell on earth will worship [*the beast from the sea*], everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in **the book of life**... // The beast they worship represents the anti-God ways of secular governments, for example: no prayer in schools, abortion, evolution, and same sex marriage. Even though nations oppose God in various ways, *many people strongly agree* 😊!
- c. **Revelation 17:8 ESV** ...the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in **the book of life** from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come. // In Revelation chapter 13, the first beast received a **fatal** wound, *yet he was healed*; then all the **unbelievers** were amazed and followed him. For us, *let us always have faith in and follow our Lord Jesus Christ!*
- d. **Revelation 20:12 ESV** And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is **the book of life**.
- I. “books” – Some books record *all deeds*, another book records *the names of those whom God has chosen before creation to be His own* (Eph. 1:3-8a).
  - II. “the dead were judged... according to their deeds” – ALL will be judged – *evaluated* – by their deeds; those knowing Jesus will be found innocent; those rejecting Jesus will be found guilty!

- e. **Revelation 20:15 ESV** ...if anyone's name was not found written in **the book of life**, he was thrown into the lake of fire. // *So each one who rejects Jesus!*
  - f. **Revelation 21:27 ESV** ...nothing unclean will ever enter [the New Jerusalem], nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in **the Lamb's book of life**. *Only in Jesus are we clean!*
  - g. <sup>2</sup> **“And many [thus all] of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake [John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15b-16], some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt [PBC, 219-220].”**
3. **Between Now and Then:** <sup>3</sup> **And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever [PBC, 220-221].”** // Since we know that we are so blessed through Jesus, *let us make Him known to others!*
- a. Who is the Church? All who – *by grace through faith* – believe in Jesus for eternal life!
  - b. What is the task of the Church?
    - I. To be *salt and light*, in our *decaying and dark* world – so let us reflect the light of Christ, *by sharing God's Truth about sin and salvation!*
    - II. As Bethlehem has proclaimed God's Word of life to *enliven the dead and build up those who are in Christ*, may the same continue until Jesus returns!

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Father, TY for choosing us to be Your own and blessing this congregation for 114 years! As trouble increases around us, *please keep us, help us, and use us!*

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