The Books Were Opened

Intro: The latter part of Revelation 20 contains the great white throne and the judgment scene. In this judgment scene, there were books that were opened. John records: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. 20:12). Let us consider the books John mentions.

I. THE GENERAL RESURRECTION
   A. All will be raised.
      1. The dead: small and great.
      2. John 5:28-29 “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”
      3. Acts 24:15 “And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”
   B. All will stand before God in judgment.
      1. Acts 17:31 “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”
      2. Rom. 14:10 “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”
      3. 2 Cor. 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

II. THE BOOKS
   A. This finds its background from Daniel 7:10 “A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.”
      1. Here the beast is judged, slain, and burned.
      2. It suggest the books contained the record of the beast’s character and deeds.
      3. In comparison:
         a. The books (plural) were opened at the judgment of the beast.
         b. The book (singular) in which those who would be delivered; Dan. 12:1 “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”
   B. The books represent the thoughts, actions, and words of each individual.
      1. The books symbolize God’s record of the lives and deeds of all who lived.
         a. God knows all and sees all.
         b. Job 42:2 “I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.”
         c. Pro. 15:3 “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”
      2. Each individual is writing their own book.
         a. All through life we are writing our own destiny.
         b. We are determining whether we are fit subjects of heaven.
III. ANOTHER BOOK—THE BOOK OF LIFE (OR GOD’S BOOK).

A. We are introduced to God’s book in the Old Testament.
   1. Exo. 32:32-33 “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. 33And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.”
   2. It was for those who feared or obeyed God; Mal. 3:16 “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.”

B. The New Testament continues this theme:
   1. Phi. 4:3 “And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.”
   2. John uses this 6 times in Revelation (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27).
C. This book contains those who have obeyed the Gospel of Christ and continued in obedience to Him.

IV. JUDGED BY THE BOOKS ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS

A. Man will be judged:
   1. By their works
      a. 2 Cor. 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”
      b. Rom. 2:6 “Who will render to every man according to his deeds:”
      c. Mat. 16:27 “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”
   2. Even by those things they think are secret.
      a. Ecc. 12:13-14 “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”
      b. Rom. 2:16 “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”

B. A standard by which man will be judged.
   1. The standard is not:
      a. Creeds and doctrines of man; Mat. 15:9 “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”
      b. Our conscience; Acts 23:1 “And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.”
      c. Sincerity; Acts 26:9 “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”
      d. The majority; Mat. 7:13-14 “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: “Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”
   2. The standard is God's Word.
      a. John 12:48 “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”
      b. Rom. 2:16 “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”
      c. Jam. 2 12 “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.”
d. Acts 17:31 “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”
(1) God’s righteousness is revealed in His Word.
(2) Psa. 119:172 “My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.”
3. That Standard can be known, and understood by man.
   a. John 8:32 “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
   b. Eph.5:17 “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”
4. That Standard can be obeyed by man.
   a. Mat. 7:21-23 “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
   b. Heb.5:8-9 “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;”

Conclusion: Have you obeyed that Standard of God’s Word so your name will be found in the book of life at the judgment?