

**"Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas, being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came unto all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Luke 3:1-7.**

NOTE: Beloved, this is a truly amazing bit of preaching from the textbook of Heaven's Wilderness Seminary, by Professor John the Baptist.

How famous would Billy Graham be – do you suppose – if he preached just one time like John the Baptist preached. In his latest book entitled, "Nearing Home," Graham reveals again how he worships at the altar of popularity and brags about his big crowds around the world to whom he has ministered to, with nary a dissatisfied customer, as they say; to wit: *"About the Author, Billy Graham, the world-renowned author, preacher, and evangelist, has delivered the Gospel message to more people face-to-face than anyone in history, and has ministered on every continent of the world in more than 185 countries. Millions have read his inspirational classics, including Angels, Peace with God, Hope for the Troubled Heart, The Journey, and Storm Warning."* Listen as the old man brags on how he brought his huge crowds into being. And as he talks, ask yourself if Billy Graham would have dared preach like John the Baptist; to wit: *"Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Lk. 3:7)*

Get the picture, Beloved. Madison Square Garden is filled to overflowing with Graham fans. Preliminaries are all done, Graham steps to the podium and without a further word, merely loudly quotes John the Baptist; to wit:

***"O GENERATION OF VIPERS, WHO HATH WARNED YOU TO FLEE FROM THE WRATH TO COME?" (Lk. 3:7)***

Freely translated, John the Baptist opened his sermon to a great multitude, as follows: "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O you nest of deadly, virulently-poisonous rattle-snakes – every last one of you; and you are descended from equally poisonous rattle-snakes – every last one of you. You are all going to Hell; and there is not a thing you can do about it." Well now, Beloved, THAT is pure Calvinism. And THAT would empty Graham's multitudinous crowd at the Madison Square Garden, and close down his fraudulent ministry, faster than a cat could wink his eye!

Beloved, we are dealing here with a false prophet the size of Balaam, and the likes of which have not often been seen on earth. And, I believe the Savior had Billy Graham expressly in view when He said:

***"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."(Mat. 7:15)***

Furthermore, this matter is so important, that the immediate context, gives explicit instructions for effective dealing with these false prophets; to wit:

***"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. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 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. 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? And then will I profess unto them, I NEVER KNEW YOU; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."(Matt. 7:13-23)***

Beloved, here is a most remarkable passage, the least attention to which will pay the richest dividends. Only a 5-point Calvinist can at once seize and accurately interpret the two main themes; to wit: (1) What does it mean, "***I NEVER KNEW YOU?***" It means, I, the sovereign God, never knew you and loved you as one of My Elect Sheep; ergo, you are going to Hell inescapable no matter what you do or don't do; and, (2) What does it mean, "***YE THAT WORK INIQUITY?***" It means, all the non-Elect. It is another name for the reprobates.

It is a fascinating study, as one goes through the Bible. God is not joking. Every son and daughter of Adam is either a Hell-bound son of Belial or a Heaven-bound saint of God – and in each case, the circumstance is irreversible, from the foundation of the world. "***For who hath resisted his will?" (Rom. 9:19.)*** Billy Graham is a wild-eyed Arminian heretic, whose phony god will not allow people to burn in literal fire forever. Graham said: "*When it comes to a literal fire, I don't preach it because I'm not sure about it.*" A Biblical Stand for Evangelists, July, 1983, pages 45-47. Graham is NOT a 5-point Calvinist. More particularly, Graham does not believe in the absolute sovereignty of God and the absolute predestination of all things. Finally, Graham does not believe in the church that Jesus built, but disdains and exploits Her.

If you approach a religious gathering, and the preacher is talking about man being a free moral agent and having a free will; and asserting that Christ died for the sins of every individual of mankind – and that every individual has only to exercise his own free will and take Christ as his own personal savior, to be saved. I say, gather up your loins and flee from that religious gathering! Run, don't walk, from that religious group. If you checked your coat and hat at the door, leave them. Get out of there! You should already smell the fire and brimstone; and you should already hear the hissing of the satanic serpent; and see something moving – slithering – on the floor.

The great puritan, Thomas Brooks, said there is only one important thing in life or death; to wit: Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life? Dr. Watts put it like this in the last verse of one of his Lyric Poems; to wit: "*In thy fair book of life and grace, O May I find my name, recorded in some humble place, Beneath my Lord the Lamb!*"

*"Life, death, and Hell, and worlds unknown, hang on His firm decree; He sits on no precarious throne, nor borrows leave to be. Chained to his throne, a volume lies, with all the fates of men, with every angel's form and size, drawn by the eternal pen. His providence unfolds the Book, and makes His counsels shine; each opening leaf, and every stroke, fulfills some deep design. Here He exalts neglected worms to scepters and a crown; and there the following page He turns, and treads the monarch down. Not Gabriel asks the reason why, nor God the reason gives; Nor dares the favorite angel pry between the folded leaves. My God, I would not long to see my fate with curious eyes, what gloomy lines are writ for me, or what bright scenes may rise. In thy fair Book of life and grace, O may I find my name, Recorded in some humble place, beneath my Lord the Lamb!"*

Mr. Spurgeon loved Thomas Brooks, and had a favorite saying for him; to wit: "If you find yourself spiritually famished, go and drink from the Brooks." For example, Brooks said:

*"Upon the credit of the Word of God, if we believe, really, savingly, and repent unfeignedly, all our sins shall be blotted out; and a Book of clean paper, in respect of sin, shall be presented to the Judge. But, there is a Book of Life, **Rev. 20:12**, and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life. The Book of Life is the Book of all those that were elected and redeemed to life through Christ Jesus. This Book of Life containeth a register of such particular persons in whose salvation God from all eternity determined to have His mercy glorified, and for whom Christ merited faith, repentance, and perseverance, that they should repent, believe, and be finally saved. The Book of Life shall be opened; that is to say, the decrees of God will be then published and made known, which are now sealed up in His breast and locked up in His archives. Then it will be seen who are appointed to life for the glorifying of God's free, rich, and sovereign grace; and whom He purposed to leave in their sins, and to perish for ever, for the exaltation of his justice. It is called a Book of Life, not that God has need of a book, but to note the certainty of predestination – viz., that God knows all and every of the elect, even as men know a thing which, for memory's sake they set down in writing. This Book of Life shall be opened in the Great Day, because then it shall appear who were elect, who reprobates; who truly believed in Christ, who not; who worshipped God in spirit and in truth, and who not; who walked with God as Noah, and who not; who set up God as the object of their fear, who not; who followed the Lamb whithersoever he went, and who not; who were sincere, and who not; who preferred Christ above ten thousand worlds; and who preferred Barabbas before Jesus, and their farms, and their oxen, and their swine, yea, their very lusts, before a Savior, a Redeemer; who are sheep, and who are goats, **Matt. 25:32**; who are sons, and who are slaves; who have mourned for their own sins and the sins of the time, and who they are that have made a sport of sin, **Ezek. 9:4,6**. Of this book of life you read often in Scripture: **Phil 4:3**, 'And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.' Vorsitus thinks it a speech taken from the custom of soldiers or cities, in which the chosen soldiers or citizens are by name written in a certain book or roll. This book or roll is called here 'the book of life,' because therein are written all the elect who are ordained to eternal life: **Rev. 3:5**, 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.' In this book of life all 'the just, that live by faith,' are written. The elect are certain of eternal life, they shall never perish, nor none can ever pluck them out of the Father's hand, nor out of Christ's hand, **John 10:28-31**. God is said to have books metaphorically; he needs no books to help his memory; he*

*does all things by his infinite wisdom, eternal foreknowledge, counsel, government, and judgment. But thus men cannot do; for whatsoever is done in their councils, cities, families, contracts, &c., for memory's sake, is set down in writing, that so, as there is occasion, they may look it over, and call to mind such things as they desire. (The holy God, by an anthropopatheia, speaketh to our capacity; for he doth all things without the help of books.) Mark, not to have our names blotted out of the book is to have them always remain therein; that is, to enjoy eternal glory; and what can the soul desire more? The names of the elect are written in the book of life. They do not obtain salvation by chance, but were elected of God to life and happiness before the foundation of the world. Now their names being once written in the book of life, they shall never, never be blotted out of that book. In the book of predestination there is not one blot to be found - the salvation of the elect is most sure and certain: **Rev. 13:8**, '**And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him** (and visa-versa, the Beast), **whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**' The names of the elect are said to be written in the book of life by a usual metaphor; for we commonly write down the names of such as are dear unto us, that we may continually remember them. So God having in his eternal counsel elected some to salvation, hath written their names in the book of life; as our Saviour tells us, '**Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven,**' **Luke 10:20**. Some understand the metaphor of the sonship of the elect; so that to be written in the book of life shews that they are heirs of glory; for we know that such are to inherit whose names are written in the last will and testament of men. '**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.**' (**Rom. 8:14-16**.) And of this Book of Life you may further read, **Rev. 17:8; 20:15; 21:27; &22:19**. Now from this book of life, that shall be opened in the great day, every sincere Christian may form up another plea; to wit: 'Most holy and blessed Lord, cast thine eye upon the book of election, and there thou wilt find my name written. Now my name being written in that book, I am exempt from all condemnation, and interested in the great salvation. My name being written in the Book of Life, I am secured from coming into the judgment of reprobation or condemnation. Jesus Christ, who hath written my name in the Book of Life, has paid all my moral debts for me; He has satisfied thy justice, and pacified thy wrath, and borne the curse, and purchased my pardon, and put upon me an everlasting righteousness, and given me my full discharge; He has crossed out the black lines of my sins with the red lines of His blood; He has cancelled all the bonds wherein I stood obliged to divine justice. I further plead, O blessed Lord, that there is an immutable connection betwixt being written in this Book of Life, and the obtaining of eternal life; and if the connection betwixt being written in this book of life and the obtaining of eternal were not peremptory (summary), what reason could there be of opening this book in the day of judgment? The Book of Life is a book of sovereign grace, upon which lies the weight of my salvation, my happiness, my all; and therefore by that book I desire to stand or fall.' 'Well,' saith the Lord, 'I cannot but accept of this plea as holy, honorable, just, and righteous; and therefore, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord; inherit the kingdom prepared for thee,' **Matt. 25:21,34.**'*

Thus, Beloved, by divine assistance, and by a special and a gracious hand of providence upon us, do we adore the doctrine of the Book of Life.

I love you.

Amen.