

## Writings in Heaven

### Commentary for March 1, 2013 — What They Contain

#### Writing, “kathab” in Hebrew

Whenever an individual delegates authority, instructions, or details to subordinates, it is useful to provide written documents so that interested parties can read the information that is communicated. Another reason for documents is because the author wants more than one individual to read the message, and for the message to have a history of origin.

The article this month by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, “Matters of Prophecy in Daniel” focuses upon the prophecies in the Book of Daniel contained in a heavenly written document titled **“The Scripture of Truth”** (Daniel 10:21, read the [“March 2013 Newsletter”](#) first.) This writing was described and shown to Daniel. The content of this book, scroll, writing, or Scripture goes from Daniel 11:2 to 12:4. All these terms fit the meaning of the Hebrew term *kathab* used in the King James Version translation “Scripture.”

This is the same Hebrew term, *kathab*, used by King David when he told Solomon how he received the “pattern” for the Temple **“in writing”** from YHWH. It was written in heaven:

**“All this,’ said David, ‘YHWH made me understand in writing [*kathab*] by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.”**

• **1 Chronicles 28:19**

#### Writing, “cephar” in Hebrew

There is another term for writing, *cephar*, which is used later within **“The Scripture of Truth.”** Clearly this *cephar*,<sup>1</sup> is also a book that originated in heaven, and it contained a list. That list was composed of names of people who shall be delivered at the end of the age:

**“... at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book [*cephar*].<sup>2</sup> And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting [eonian] life, and some to shame and everlasting [eonian] contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever [to the eon and beyond].”**

• **Daniel 12:1–3**

The common Hebrew word translated as “book” is *cephar*, which is better rendered as “writing.” This writing listed who would receive salvation when Messiah, Christ, returns. The

<sup>1</sup> Our English word “cipher” comes from this term. It means to make marks or tallies for counting. It has been speculated that the alphabets of many cultures originated from accounting tally marks.

<sup>2</sup> God’s works are known to Him from the beginning (Acts 15:18). The concept of God having a name for you and me is intriguing. Let me ask, are the names God has for us different than the names we are born into, choose for ourselves, or even names we marry into? I do not know, but God has a name for lesser things. He has named every star (Psalm 147:4).

first occurrence of *cephar* occurs in Exodus when Moses and YHWH both indicate that God keeps a book or a list in written form:

“[Moses:] **Yet now, if you will forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray you, out of your book** [*cephar*] **which you have written. And YHWH said unto Moses, Whosoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book** [*cephar*].

• **Exodus 32:32–33**

This was not the Book of Life mentioned in the New Testament, but its purpose may have been similar. This “book” in Exodus likely listed those who were God’s chosen people, in other words a list of all individuals within the tribes of Israel, as well as the mixed multitude of Gentiles.<sup>3</sup> God held the book and blotted out the names of individuals, those who sinned against God. That means they did not merely die, they were killed by God.

Later, the prophet Ezekiel was shown a book, when the heavens “**were opened**” (Ezekiel 1:1). The message was about the rebellious people of the northern kingdom of Israel:

“**Be not you rebellious like that rebellious house: open your mouth, and eat that I give you. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book** [*cephar*] **was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without** [on both sides of the scroll]: **and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.**”

• **Ezekiel 2:8–10**

Ezekiel was experiencing a vision when he was shown the *cephar*. He was commanded to eat it. The symbol of this is that the message of the writing became part of Ezekiel.

### **Writing, “byblos” in New Testament Greek**

There is also a writing in heaven which has your name on it (Luke 10:20; Hebrews 12:23). There is a “**Book of Life**” which is talked about in Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 15, 21:27, and 22:19. The Greek *byblos* is the root term from which we get our English word “bible.” It actually meant a “scroll” in those days because all books were scrolls.

The passage in Philippians is interesting for two reasons. First, it was one of the books written by Paul to explain the Mystery of God. Paul’s reference indicates that this “**Book of Life**” is a list of all believers, not just Jewish believers. Second, the apostle Paul was writing about the “**Book of Life**” years before the apostle John first experienced his vision which is the Book of Revelation.

This “**Book of Life**” is also a list of names, but likely there is more information contained there than just names. Who knows, perhaps this “**Book of Life**” also contains the locations where all of the righteous dead in Christ are located, so the angels can gather us when Christ returns and the resurrection occurs (Matthew 24:31; Mark 13:27).

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<sup>3</sup> In Psalm 69:28 the phrase “**Book of Life**” in Hebrew (*cepher chayyim*) designates a list of citizens of the land. Similar lists are in Nehemiah 7:5, 12:22–23. A negative example is in Ezekiel 13:9.