

Lent, Day 39  
Friday, April 19, 2019 (Written a day late)  
Good Friday

### Revelation 20:11–15

Perhaps all of us can remember what it was like to stand in a line with our peers while team captains school yard picked us for teams. Of course, we had hopes for which team we would be on (the one which looked like would be a sure win), but we were especially were afraid to be picked last. To be picked last was a commentary on our skill. It meant these two, who represent the best of us, valued us as the worst. Even worse than to be picked last is to not be picked at all. To be told you don't just have little value, but no value.

John paints a picture of the last judgment. All of the dead both from Hades, the inescapable place of the dead, and the sea, considered separate from Hades stand before the judgment seat to have their lives reviewed. Maybe that's a chilling thought placed in the context of the school yard pick conversation above. We have to ask, will our lives measure up? The separation is between life eternal and final death—pretty high stakes.

But, then there is something that changes the picture from chilling to expectancy. There is a second book, the book of life. Or, as John has mentioned several times in this book, the Lamb's book of life. I love how Wright describes this:

This is a vivid way of safeguarding the truth taught by Jesus in John's gospel, "You did not choose me, but I chose you," as well as by Paul in Romans 8:28–30 and elsewhere. But this is subject to the proviso that if there is choosing being done, it is God who chooses, and the God who chooses is the triune God who works as father, son, and spirit, not as a blind watchmaker or a celestial bureaucrat. When God chooses, he also redeems; when God chooses and redeems, he also works in peoples lives; and the miracle of the divine-human relationship, from the very beginning, has always been that human though, will and action is somehow enhanced, rather than being cancelled out, by the divine initiative and power.<sup>1</sup>

God does not choose us based on our merit (none would be chosen) but on his love and grace. Rather than devaluing us, God's choice gives us the highest value. Therefore, those who are in Christ Jesus are written in the Lamb's book of life because they were chosen in Christ before the creation of the world. You too, if you are not already, can be in Christ and written in his book of life. You have to only chose to believe this good news.

### Prayer

Lord, you chose us before we knew you. Now would you conform our lives to the life you have give to us in Christ. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> N. T. Wright, *Revelation for Everyone* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 185.