

Christ Has Purchased Global Praise

by John Piper

This sermon delves into Revelation chapter 5, focusing on the significance of the Lamb of God's sacrifice and the universal scope of His redemption. It emphasizes how Jesus, as the slain Lamb, purchased a people for God from every tribe, language, people, and nation, freeing them from sin's penalty, rebellion, and God's wrath. The message highlights the all-encompassing power of Christ's blood to overcome ethnic pride and fear, bringing salvation to a diverse global community.

Scripture: Revelation 5:9, John 3:36, Ephesians 2:3, Philippians 3:4, Acts 18:10, Ezekiel 36:26, John 10:15, Ephesians 1:4, Revelation 13:8

Topics: "Redemption", "Unity in Diversity"

Description

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Transcript

I invite you to take your Bibles and turn with me to Revelation chapter 5. Revelation 5 and we're going to read verses 1 through 10 and focus on verses 9 and 10. Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals.

And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. Now I take this scroll to be the secret decrees and counsels of God concerning how it will fare with his people as history comes to a climax. Verse 4, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

And one of the elders said to me, weep no more. Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has conquered so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals. And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain with seven horns and with seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

So the conquering that makes the Lion of Judah worthy to reveal the decrees of God is a conquering that was achieved as a slain lamb, which is exactly what verse 9 says. Worthy are you to take the scroll and open its seals for you were slain. Verse 7, and he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne, and when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song saying, worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals for you were slain. And by your blood you ransomed or you purchased a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth. Let's pray.

There is power, power, power in the name of Jesus. When we pray in the name of Jesus, we tap into power. You won us by your blood, this text says, and that song said.

You won us, bought us, purchased us, ransomed us, obtained us, secured us forever by your blood, Jesus. We come in Jesus' name, your name, through you to our Father in heaven and ask that power would rest upon this message to save sinners who are not yet born of God, to rescue people from very bad theology, to call or confirm the call of some into world evangelization and cross-cultural missions, and to show us how all of us are to speak to the lost concerning what you have achieved. I ask this in the mighty name of Jesus.

Amen. So it's clear from verse 9 that the ultimate effect of the achievement of the blood of the Lamb is that all of heaven sings about the worth of the Lamb, right? It's so clear. The ultimate effect is worthy, worthy.

They're singing. That's the effect of the purchase. So let that be the banner over this message and over your lives.

Everything you ever say to anybody about the benefits that the purchase has for them, the ultimate end is worthy. It's a song. The purchase is all designed for the praise.

Just mark it. Don't ever think another way. Don't feel another way.

Something is going to miss if everything becomes horizontal, even if it's the best news in the world. That's the banner flying over this message. Now, here are the three things I want to try to answer.

One, what did the Lamb of God do? Number two, for whom did he do it? And number three, what do you say when you bring this message to the nations? What do you say? Number one, what did he do? Verse nine, they sang a new song saying, worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed, or you purchased. The word is *agaradzo*, the ordinary, the most ordinary word for buy something. There's no fancy word ransom, there's no fancy word redeem, there's just buy.

You bought a people for God. Now what did he do? He died at the hands of slaughterers. That's what slain means.

You were slain, you were slaughtered, that's what you do to an animal, and by being slaughtered with blood drained out, you purchased a people, you purchased people for God. By your blood you ransomed, purchased, bought people for God. So that the central, pivotal, all-important act is dying, being killed,

being slaughtered.

So the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, that's the long-awaited Messiah, Jesus Christ, becomes a lamb-like lion to be slaughtered. That's the crucifixion of Jesus. You can see that in Revelation 11.8. And by his crucifixion, this death, this bloodletting of the lamb-like lion purchases, buys a people for God.

Now what does that mean? What in the world is that primitive, crazy, wild, utterly unmodern, horrible notion mean? Death of a Son of God purchases a people by being slaughtered. Purchased from what? Buying out of what? Purchased for what? Purchased how? So that's what I want to try to answer. Let's start with purchased from what.

Very close analogy. Parallel text to 5.9 is 1.5.6. You want to look at it with me maybe? Chapter 1 verses 5 to 6. It goes like this, "...to Him who loves us and freed us from our sins by His blood, made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever." So 5.9 says the Lamb by His blood purchased a people for God, and 1.5 chapter 1 verse 5 says the Lamb, Jesus Christ, by the blood shed, freed us from our sins.

Now, whatever other powers held this people, that they needed to be bought out of, whatever other powers may have been there holding them in bondage, holding in some horrible destiny awaiting them, whatever others there were, chapter 1 verse 5 makes crystal clear, a liberating price was paid, namely blood, to free us from our sins. The payment had to be made as a payment for sins, the penalty of sins. A payment had to be made, and the payment was the death of the Lamb.

And so the fundamental thing that happened in the slaying of the Lamb was the death penalty for sin paid. That's the meaning of purchased a people first. To free a people from their sins by the payment of blood and to purchase the people for God by the payment of blood are the same part and whole.

Purchase is bigger, way bigger, but this is the first glorious piece of it. So the blood of the Lamb, the death of the Lamb was the payment of a penalty for our sins, and now we are, as verse 5 says, free from the penalty and the condemnation of sin. He freed us from our sins by His blood.

It's not going to happen to us, that is, it's not going to happen to the people for whom He died. Second observation about the meaning of purchased people for God. Let's go to chapter 13, verse 7. I'm trying to stay inside the book of Revelation.

I could have so eagerly gone to Romans for answering all these questions, but let's just stay here. Let John unpack for us in his own terms what purchase of people means. Revelation 13, 7 and 8. It's about the Beast.

It was allowed, the Beast was allowed to make war on the Saints and conquer them. Got to fit that into your eschatology. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation.

Sound familiar? Verse 9, chapter 5. Authority was given to the Beast over every tribe and people and language and nation. So the Beast has authority over all the peoples, all the tribes, all the languages, all the nations, and they're all going to worship him, except one group. Verse 8. He was given authority over them all, and all who dwell on the earth will worship it.

Everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of the life of the Lamb who was slain. So there's a book in heaven, and before the foundation of the world it had names in

it. The book contained the names of a people, and if a person's name is in the book, that person is kept from worshipping the Beast.

Everybody else worships the Beast. They are saved by being in the book from the sway of the authority of the Beast, and these names comprised a people from, it seems, every tribe and people and tongue and language and nation. The name of the book is the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

Why? Why is that the name of the book? It's the name of the book because when Revelation 5, 9 says that the blood of the slain Lamb purchased a people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, that purchase includes the preventing of the worship of the Beast. That's what the blood does, and I hope you never sing that song the same again. What the blood does.

The blood bought new hearts of liberation from the Beast. The blood bought belief in Jesus instead of belief in the Beast. The blood secured the worship of God instead of the worship of the Beast.

It's the reason for calling the book the book of life of the Lamb that was slain. They're in the book, and being in the book of the blood covering, they are kept from idolatry of the Beast. So the blood of the Lamb protected them from the power of the Beast, purchased for them transformed hearts so that they do not worship.

We'll come back to this later. Summarize so far we've seen two meanings for the purchase in verse 9 of chapter 5. By your blood you purchased a people, meaning number one, you paid a price for the penalty of their sins so that they don't have to bear the condemnation for sin anymore. Number two, you secured by your blood new hearts, heart of stone taken out, heart of flesh put in, that will not worship the Beast.

You purchased for them freedom from the penalty of sin, and you purchased freedom from the rebellion of their hearts. Third observation about the meaning of purchasing people. Let's go to chapter 14, verses 9 to 11.

Chapter 14. If anyone worships the Beast, he also will drink, I'm at verse 10 now, he will drink of the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night.

And then I'm jumping to chapter 20, verse 15 to complete the picture. Chapter 20, verse 15. And if anyone's name is not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

So the most terrible and the final thing to say about what this purchased people are purchased from is that they are purchased from the wrath of God, which John says is the lake of fire, which results in torment that lasts forever and ever. Verse 10 of chapter 14. He will drink the wine of God's wrath.

Verse 11. The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. Chapter 20, verse 15.

He was thrown into the lake of fire if his name was not in the book of the life of the Lamb who was slain. This is what Jesus had said in John 3 36. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.

Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. Remains on him. It's already on the world and everybody in it.

Everybody's a child of wrath, Paul says in Ephesians 2. Everybody. And if you don't go to Jesus, you don't have Jesus, that's where you stay. It's what Paul said in Romans 5 9. Since therefore we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

So we've had three answers now to the question, what does it mean that the Lamb slain purchased people from every tribe and tongue and nation? What does it mean? It means, number one, he purchased freedom from condemnation for our sins. No more condemnation for those whom he bought. Number two, he purchased a heart of belief.

He freed us from the rebelliousness that worships the beast by the blood. And three, he purchased us from the wrath of God and eternal torment in the lake of fire. That's what he purchased us from, if you're in the people, who he purchased.

What did he purchase us for? His first answer in verse 9 of chapter 5 is for God. He purchased them for God, and then he unfolds in verse 10, what does that mean? For God in what way? Like slave labor? Don't assume people know what you're talking about when you say words like for God. That's not clear.

Preachers clarify. Please. They don't muddy waters.

They clarify. They're precise. Please.

That's what this school is for. Don't add to the misery of confusion in the world. It's everywhere.

Muddy, confusing talk about everything. That's not in my manuscript. I'm just winging it here.

Pleading with you. So for God, what do you mean you purchased a people for God? By your blood you purchased people for God. Once they were not God's people, what do you mean they weren't God's people? He made them.

They are his. He can do with them what he wants. Yes, yes, that's true.

This is not what he means. Of course, he owns them as a creator, but they're not his yet as treasure. They're not his yet as family.

Something has to happen if these people are going to move from objects of wrath to family, treasure, over which he sings. And then he unpacks. What's the nature of that family? The nature of that treasure? What did they do? What is it like? In verse 10 says that by this purchase you have made them a kingdom, priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.

Are you kidding me? You don't look like rulers. We don't walk by sight. So they are purchased by the blood of the Lamb to belong to God, first as a kingdom with God as their all-protecting, all-providing, all-guiding, all-satisfying King.

Second, as priests. All of them. All of them.

With access to this all-satisfying God all the time by the blood. Third, as co-rulers over the earth. Paul says judges of the earth.

This is what the people were purchased for, to belong to God, his treasured possession, that is, his kingdom under his care, his priesthood in his service, his magistrates sharing his reign, breathtaking,

staggering, to keep you awake at night, turning on your bed thinking, really? Me? Me? Instead of just clicking on a video and becoming worldly. So what does it mean? By his blood he purchased people for God. It means that Christ died and rose again, paid a payment, provided by God who sent him according to John 3.16, purchasing a people from the penalty of their sins, from rebellious hearts, from the wrath of God for the honor and the joy everlasting of being his treasure, his kingdom, his priests, his magistrates over the earth.

That's the answer to our first question. What's the meaning of purchased people? And if you just wanted to broaden out from Revelation, the answer would get much longer and even more glorious. Second question, for whom did he purchase this? For whom did he pay? Who are this people in Revelation 5? Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people.

It's not there in Greek. The word people isn't there in Greek. Here's the way it reads.

By your blood you ransomed for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, period. Doesn't even have a direct object. I wonder why.

I don't know. Maybe because in Greek you'd have the same problem we feel in English when we say, he ransomed the people from every people. Sounds weird.

Maybe he said, I just don't want to say that. I mean it, I don't want to say it. Sounds funny.

That'd be my first guess. I don't know the answer. I do know he expects us to supply that.

It's not bad to have that in English. We ought to have that word in English. Good translation, ESV and most of the others.

But just didn't want you to think I missed it, and that there's probably a good reason for why he wrote it the way he wrote it. So he purchased people, not rocks, toads. He purchased people from every people, tongue, tribe, nation.

Who are they? The first thing to see that you can't escape is the word from. That's really there. By your blood you purchased people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, which is different from saying you purchased every tribe and language and people and nation, and it's different from saying you purchased all the people in every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Very different. The Lamb purchased a people scattered among the nations. He purchased a people from the nations.

He bought them from the nations. He paid for them out of the nations of the world. This is what John was showing us in John 10, 15 to 16 when he quoted Jesus like this.

This is John 10, 15. I lay down my life for the sheep and I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also.

They will listen to my voice. That's why any evangelism succeeds. So by his blood he purchases a people, his sheep, and he gathers them by means of missionaries and witnesses who speak the words of the Shepherd and the sheep hear the voice of the Shepherd and they follow him and he gathers them from every tribe and tongue and people and nation and they are his kingdom.

It's what John meant in John 11, 52 when he said this. Jesus will die to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. Keep on preaching Paul.

Don't be afraid. I have a people in this city. Acts 18.

Jesus will die to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. It's what Paul meant when he said to the Ephesian elders, care for the church of God which he obtained with his own blood. That's what he meant when he said in Ephesians 5, 25, husbands love your wives like this.

Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. Don't love every woman like you love your wife. And it's what Jesus meant when he said at the Last Supper, this cup is poured out for you as the new covenant in my blood.

What did the blood of the new covenant purchase? Different from the blood thrown against the altar at Sinai. I'll read it to you. This is Ezekiel 36, 26, and 27.

I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. In other words, the blood of the new covenant, the blood of the Lamb, purchased a people who by the blood are kept from worshiping the beast. Their names are in a book before the foundation of the world, Revelation 13, 8. They're a chosen people by grace before the creation of the world, Ephesians 1, 4. And those whom he chose, he purchased.

And those whom he purchased, he called. And those whom he called, he delivered from the heart of idolatry. And those whom he delivered and gave a new heart, he justified.

And those whom he justified, he glorified. The purchase of the blood of Christ is a real purchase, not a possible purchase. It's a real purchase.

He obtained forever what he paid for. He will have it. The Lamb will have the reward of his suffering.

It is sure. It is done. That's the first thing to say about the question, who are these people for whom he died or whom he purchased? They are the people in the book of life chosen before the foundation of the world, the church, the bride, the sheep, the children, all believers.

Second, here's the second thing to say, which is why I was assigned this text and given the title I was. It says that these people for whom he paid this price and did this liberation come from every tribe and language and people and nation. What should I say about that? Of all the things I could say about, they're not political nation-states, there's 6,000 languages, untold numbers of tribes in this world, and every one of them he's moving toward with a purchase that's done and sending us to trumpet the word of the Shepherd which the sheep will hear and come, but here's what I'm gonna do because I've never seen this before and I want you to come with me into a fresh sight.

I'm gonna go to Philippians chapter 3 and I'll lay these texts on top of each other and then I'm going to think out loud. When Paul wrote Philippians 3, he was trying to help a certain group of opponents realize that their vaunted boast in their ethnic and religious categories were useless without Jesus. Here's what he says, this is verses 4 to 6 of Philippians 3, if anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more.

Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor to the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless. Hmm. Hmm.

Historic people, Israel. Honored tribe, Benjamin. Cultural, linguistic, ethnic elite, Hebrew of Hebrews.

Highest religious exclusivity, Pharisees. All of them honored, all of them esteemed, all of them historically venerated, and in relation to God, all of them precious, beautiful, and yet all of them worthless where Christ is missing. Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss, verse 7, for the sake of Christ.

And yet, as a slain lamb, Jesus purchased a people from all of them, all over the world. All over the world, people feel superior in their tribe, their people, their language, their ethnicity, or all over the world, people feel inferior in their tribe, their people, their language, their ethnicity. Their sense of ethnic superiority makes them feel more worthy of God's favor, or their sense of ethnic inferiority makes them feel less worthy of God's favor.

And into that universal pride and fear, or pride and shame, Revelation 5-9 says, the Lamb of God, by his blood, infallibly purchased a people, a single people, from all of them, all of them. The effectiveness of his blood purchase can't be stopped by ethnic pride or ethnic fear. He has conquered by his blood.

He will have what he purchased. His blood will break the back of all ethnic pride. His blood will overcome ethnic fear.

The blood will shatter tribal superiority, and the blood will surprise tribal inferiority. The blood will bring down linguistic snobbery and give hope to linguistic shame. In other words, Revelation 5-9, by your blood, you ransom people for God from every tribe, every language, every people, every nation, tells us not only the multi-ethnic global reach of Christ and his purchase, it also points to the kinds of obstacles, ethnic pride, ethnic fear, that cannot defeat the achievement of the blood.

The price is paid. The people are purchased. No ethnic boast, no ethnic embarrassment can change the achievement of the blood.

He will have his reward from every people. Last question. This semester-long series on making disciples near and far comes to an end.

What are you going to say about this to unbelievers? What are you going to say to the nations when you go? Some of you are going to go to an unreached people, know nothing, they know nothing, and every one of you will go somewhere and say something to some unbeliever. What will you say about all this? Like, I don't want to talk about all that, that's theology, that's not. Here's what you'll say.

The God who made and rules the heavens and the earth and the sea is great and holy and sovereign and righteous, a God of truth, a God of justice. He holds every human being accountable for how we've treated each other and how we've dishonored Him. Everybody, He holds us all accountable, but in His mercy, this Creator God who sustains the world and owns and runs, governs everything in His mercy, has chosen a hopeless, undeserving people for Himself.

From all the tribes, all the peoples, all the languages of the nations, including yours, the Son of God, Jesus Christ came into the world to accomplish a great salvation by His death and resurrection. He never sinned, and yet He died and rose again and reigns and will come again to judge the living and the dead. And when

He shed His blood, when He died, this infinitely valuable blood of the Son of God purchased a people, paid the penalty for all their sins, freed them from the wrath of God, secured them new hearts of non-idolatry and faith, made them a kingdom, made them priests, made them co-magistrates, His family, His treasure forever.

And all of this glorious salvation God has accomplished in Jesus Christ, it is a finished work, it is a complete redemption, it is the greatest work that God has ever done or ever will do in the history of the world. And it is free! You can't earn it, you can't buy it, you can't barter for it, you can't complete it, you can't finish it, you can't add to it, it is finished. And it is all in Him, it's in Christ.

So on behalf of Jesus as His ambassador, I plead with you, take Him, receive Him, embrace Him, own Him, have Him as your life, your Savior, your Lord, your treasure, as your all, have Him. He's free, and if you will have Him, if you will receive Him, you get everything He's ever done with Him. So receive Him, all that He's ever done, your sins forgiven, God's wrath removed, everlasting joy in His kingdom as His priests, as His magistrates, and yes, you will find out that even the faith that you are now about to exercise was bought for you.

And you will be glad, because you wouldn't have believed any other way. He's a great Savior, a great friend, a great guide, a great counselor, a great treasure. I want you to believe.

I want you to be my sister and brother. That's what you'll say. Let's pray.

So Father, you have accomplished in Christ a great salvation. It is glorious beyond words, and we are in such deep trouble because of our sin and your wrath. There is no other way forward in life or eternity.

And so I pray now that as we go, we will know what you've done, for whom you did it, own it, and speak it in the power of the name of Jesus. Amen.

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