

NOTES FROM TIM GAMSTON'S SERMON- 14th April 2024 am

TITLE: "Purchased by Christ to the praise of Christ"

TEXT: Revelation 5:1-14

SERIES: More on mission part 1

Scripture references from the ESV

Revelation 5:1-14 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. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" ³ And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, ⁴ and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁵ 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."

⁶ 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. ⁷ And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ 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 people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,

¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!"

¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever!"

¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Twice a year, we focus on world mission, hearing about what God is doing through our mission partners around the world and praying for them. You might wonder how

that helps you to sustain your faith in the challenges you are facing, and also how the various elements in the passage above have any relevance to you in the week ahead.

Revelation was written to people who were suffering far more than anything we experience.

These believers were facing state persecution by the Romans and they were being arrested, tortured and killed. They needed to know who really ruled and who ultimately wins.

- Did the Emperor of Rome ultimately rule over their lives, so that he was free to do as he wished?
- Were they powerless against him and would Christianity be wiped out by the might of the Roman Empire?

The book of Revelation, as revealed to John by the Spirit of God, spoke into those fears and questions.

**Revelation still speaks into our fears and questions, showing that
at the centre of the universe is the throne of God
and God is sat upon the throne.**

Everything revolves around the sovereign God. Earlier in the book (4:1-2) John wrote: **After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."** ² At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.

The one seated on the throne is the eternal God (4:8)

John goes on to tell us what God is holding in his right hand (v1 above). This scroll is God's secret decree concerning human history, as you can see from **chapter 6ff** (please read in your Bible). Everything that the sovereign God has determined will take place on earth is written in it by God before it happens. That is because:

God determines human history.

**Everything in this universe revolves around the
eternal, living, ruling, all powerful, all seeing, all wise, all glorious God,
who exists eternally as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

John wants us to see that, and it would be a truly terrifying concept if it were not for something else that John sees.

He sees a Lamb, representing the Lord Jesus Christ who has purchased people for God and given them a status as kings and priests in God's family, as we can see in the song of the 24 elders (vv9-10 above).

Those people are us.

- We are Christ's people, his church.
- We belong to the God who is seated on the throne, and who rules over everything in all creation
- We are reigning with Christ as kings and priests over the earth.

This exalted status has been secured by Christ through his life, death, resurrection and ascension, in order that God as Father, Son and Spirit might be glorified. That is how this chapter ends (vv13-14 above). Revelation 5 shows us what Christ, as the Lion-Lamb, has secured for us.

Knowing what Christ has secured for us will give us assurance and joy when life feels overwhelming, and it will motivate us to serve global mission.

This is the vision we need to sustain us in everything we face this week, and to give us a passion for global mission.

Revelation 5 shows us three things that Christ has secured for us.

1. **Christ has secured the right to govern human history.** John sees the sealed scroll containing the decrees of God for the climax of human history, and he wants us to understand that none of this can happen unless the seals are broken (vv1-2). He is deeply distressed (v4) that no one can be found who is worthy to open the scroll (v2) From John's perspective, it seems that God's will for human history is not going to be accomplished.

One of the elders tells him to look and to see the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the tribe from which the kings of Israel were to come. When John looks, he sees, not a lion, but a LAMB (v6). The Lamb had been killed, but now it is alive. Not only that, but as he watches, he sees the Lion-Lamb come out from among the 24 elders and

approach the throne of God, climbing the steps to the throne. No one else was worthy to do that.

As he comes near to God, he takes the scroll from his hand and takes his seat on the throne. He breaks the seals and begins to open the scroll. As he does so, he sets in motion the decrees of God for human history. Paul speaks of this in his prayer for the Ephesians (1:20-23): **The Lord Jesus Christ, who died and is risen, is seated ... at [the Father's] right hand in the heavenly places,**²¹ **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.**²² **And he [has] all things under his feet and [has been given] as head over all things to the church,**²³ **which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.**

When John sees the scroll being opened, terrible things happen on earth – things that cause death and destruction and bring suffering to God's people. John wants us to see that all of these things are under the rule of King Jesus.

Through sacrifice, Christ has secured the right to reign over human history.

2. Christ has secured the redemption of his people. When the Lamb took the scroll, the 24 elders fell down before the lamb, and sang praise to him (v8), telling us what the Lamb has accomplished. (vv9-10).

Through his sacrifice, he purchased people and those people include you, if you are trusting in Christ.

- He purchased us to set us free from the power and condemnation of sin. John speaks of Jesus **who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood** (Rev 1:5)
- He purchased us from idolatry. John speaks of the beast that is in opposition to God (13:8) **and all who dwell on earth will worship it (the beast), everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.** If you are a believer, take a moment to dwell on the wonder that your name was written in the book of life before you had lived one day or done anything, good or evil. Christ's death purchased for us a new heart that loves God and wants to worship him alone.

- He purchased us from God's wrath that is coming on those who choose to worship the beast rather than God. (14:9-10) **If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,¹⁰ he also will drink 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 in the presence of the Lamb.**

Christ has purchased us from sin, Satan and death

He has purchased us for God

- We are purchased for God to belong to him in the unique relationship as kings and priests to rule on the earth
- We are purchased for God to find our greatest delight in God and to express that delight in praise and obedience to him

In the song (v9), we learn that those purchased for God come from every tribe, language, people and nation. We were given to Christ by the Father in eternity.

**2000 years ago, Christ was slain to purchase those who were given to him –
to buy us as a treasured possession for God.**

3. **Christ has secured the praise of heaven and earth.** What are we to do as Christ's chosen people? This chapter shows us. It is filled with praise. The elders are joined in their praise (v9) by the angels (v11), and the whole of creation (v13). Then the praise starts all over again (v14). It is a continual round of praise to our God.

Our sin alienated us from God, leaving us hostile to him and ready to worship everything that is not God.

Christ the Lamb has defeated our sin through his own sacrifice.

Christ the Lamb has purchased us from sin, Satan and death.

**He has purchased us for God so that we will be a people who join the angels around
the throne
to praise God for all eternity.**

How does that help us now? When we have the eyes of our hearts enlightened so that we truly know this:

I. **We have the motivation to serve global mission.** It is one of the 24 elders who tells John to look at the Lion-Lamb. These 24 represent all those whom Christ has purchased from under both the Old (12 tribes of Israel) and New (the 12 apostles) Covenants. They represent those who have been redeemed, and it is one of the redeemed (not an angel or any other creature) who tells John to look at the Lion-Lamb. The implication is that this message (Christ has purchased a people for himself) has been entrusted by God to the people who have themselves been purchased by Christ.

- Because we are **from** every ethnicity, language, people and social sphere, we are to go **to** every ethnicity, language, people and social sphere.

As a church, we are right to support world mission as we do, both financially and with a regular focus on mission during the year.

Christ is pleased that this church has made world mission a priority.

One thing we can all do is to offer up prayer to God who sits on the throne, as the 24 elders do. It is one of the ways we reign with Christ now. We see Christ conquering the nations as

- We pray for the message of Christ's victory through sacrifice to be preached
- We pray for the Holy Spirit to cause those for whom Christ died to come to faith.

Christ has won the victory

We support this victorious cause by supporting world mission

II. **We have the motivation to praise our God.** We are not purchased primarily for our own benefit, but for praise to God.

The purchase of his blood is for the purpose of praise to God.

- All heaven sings of the worth of the Lamb who was slain but who now lives and this is what we will be doing for all eternity!

At the moment life is hard, as we experience trials of many kinds and feel overwhelmed by what life throws at us.

- We do not look like the kings and priests who are reigning and will reign.

- We do not feel that we are the glorious people of God who worship a glorious redeemer

Revelation 5 assures us that this is what Christ has secured for us. It is not just a possibility but a certainty.

- Christ has **secured** the right to govern human history, the redemption of his people and the praise of heaven

Therefore we can look beyond our present suffering and have assurance that Christ is governing everything for our good, that he has secured a place in heaven for us and that he will bring us into eternal joy.

What a motivation to praise God! Praise focusses away from our current struggles. Instead, we look to the one who:

- Rules victoriously over everything that hits us now, turning it around for our good
- Loves us enough to shed his blood to purchase us for God
- Will fill us with joy both now and for all eternity

Just as it is essential for the church to come together in corporate prayer, so corporate praise is also essential if Christ is to be glorified. Nothing shouts greater victory for God in the face of demons, angels and hostile forces than the people of God united together in corporate praise to the God who has purchased them.

We declare Christ as victorious and we declare our assurance of what awaits us as the people of God when we declare (v12):

**Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom
and might and honour and glory and blessing!**