

TEXT – Psalm 51:5-6.

*"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me know wisdom".*

Our text clearly defines for us the make up of each and every one of us. We have as it were, an inward appearance that can not immediately be seen, as it is wrapped up with an outward wrapping, our body. Down through the ages, many have pondered on this and we have had many words of wisdom enumerate from this, including the words of our Lord, some of which are: Matthew 6:16, *"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast"*. Matthew 7:15 *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves"*. Matthew 15:18-20 *"But those things which proceed out of the mouth came forth from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man"*.

These teachings have prompted some very good everyday morals that we learn and take with us in life. "You should never judge a book by its cover". "There is always two sides to a coin". These sayings teach us clearly, that there is always a hidden side that cannot be seen but must be unwrapped before we can get the full picture. If we look at the current difficulty to open packaging some manufacturers are putting on their goods, we hear many people expressing the opinion that 'they really are trying to stop you getting at what is inside'. This is a fair statement, but we can't just blame the manufacturers, after all, most of us do the same thing in our own lives. We tend to wrap ourselves in layers of packaging, often making it difficult for others to discover the real person underneath.

We often meet people who outwardly display a happy-go-lucky attitude, but when we get to know them better, we often find some tragedy, worry, or sincerity from within, than what the outward wrapping suggested. Some use this outward appearance as a means of preventing getting too close until they are ready to open up. Unfortunately, some never open up. On the other side we have to be careful of the other group the Lord spoke of.

How often have we seen the flashy expensive wrapping on a parcel designed to impress. It promises untold delights, but when we open it, the contents don't live up to the wrapping. In people we have to be careful to make this assessment.

We often read of people in show business who become idols because of the glitz and glamour on the surface, but take away the glossy wrapping and often there is little substance underneath.

We must be careful in not placing too much importance on our outward wrapping to just create an image. We all try to present ourselves in the best light, but at all times remember what is important in God's sight and that is what lies inside the wrapping. The Psalmist tells us that wisdom is given to what is in the hidden part and this is so. We remember the words written in the scripture in so many different places and summed up so clearly in John 2:24-25. *"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man"*. This is the wisdom we must learn.

Apostle Cliff Flor  
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TEXT – 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

*"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."*

Through the ages the children of God, especially those whom God had entrusted with a special mission, had been scorned and scoffed at. This shows that ridicule is the lot of all God's children in their struggle for spiritual maturity. Noah was undoubtedly scoffed at when he "foolishly" wanted to build a ship in a place where there was no water to be seen.

In dreams God told Joseph that he would one day be his brothers master. We are told: "The matter of his dreams caused them to hate him more." Gen. 37: 5 & 8. There is no doubt that Joseph was ridiculed and called names, such as perhaps "Dream-King".

David once cried out that he and his people were the target of ridicule and insults. He says: "Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us." Ps.44:14-19. He also says, "I was the song of the drunkards" Ps. 69:12; However, he adds, "Yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way."

Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, had to suffer great humiliation and ridicule. They spat in His face and hit Him with their fists. Matt. 26:27. They represented, in caricature, His kingship, by putting on Him a scarlet robe and a crown of thorns on His head. Then they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him. saying: "Hail King of the Jews!" Matt. 27:28-29. What was the result of this ridicule? Noah continued to build the ark, and God's promise was fulfilled. Joseph did not deviate from God's path, and his dreams came true. He was thereby a blessing to thousands of people.

Even though David was often ridiculed, and in spite of his sins he became the founder of the kingdom of Judea. Even today, many thousands of Jews remember him with respect and gratitude. Jesus did not react to ridicule. His behaviour was, and remained, dignified to the end, and it commanded respect. He even forgave His torturers. (Deacon Stephen did the same while he was being stoned) Acts 7:59. Jesus did not answer futile questions. Peter said that scoffers shall come who, among other things, will say: "Where is the promise of His coming?" 2 Peter 3:3-4. If world events are followed carefully, it becomes obvious that the ridicule of Christianity and the Christians is on the increase. Belief in God and in Jesus Christ is ever more frequently rejected. In the future this attitude could be stronger, and we should be prepared for it. Christians who profess their faith could sooner or later become the target of ridicule. In such a situation, let us prove ourselves to be true followers of Jesus Christ by being dignified in our behaviour; not reacting to insulting comments but keeping silent and only saying something when it is worthwhile, and to consider it an honour to be allowed to suffer with Jesus Christ, and to pray for all evil-doers, for God desires that all men be helped. 2 Peter 3:9. If those who ridicule do not change their ways, the words from Isaiah 29:20 will be applicable to them, "The scorner is consumed". This is not God's will; He wants to save everyone. However, every man will reap what he has sown. Consequently, those who reject God's love and continue to do so will not enter into the Kingdom of God. Only when a man stops ridiculing will he be able to understand Jesus Christ's mission and receive God's mercy. In weakness you receive strength!

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TEXT – Matthew 25:31-46.

*“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”*

We see a very clear picture of how the Lord will judge righteously. We see a clear picture before us of a world; a spiritual world and a natural world. The natural world is very easy for us to picture for we see the hungry, we see those who are thirsty, we see those who are sick, we see those who have no clothes, we see those who are in prisons, and we see that we can help them, but this help must not come according to the Lord as a compulsory thing on us. It must not come as something we are seeking a reward for, but it must be done from a heart where we do not even realise that we are doing it.

For those who are on the right side said – “When did we see all this happen?” They did not recognise or know that they had done it. We can see in the earthly a very clear picture. The same applies in the spiritual, more so now than ever in our period of time where the world is lying in darkness. Many are hungry, hungry for the word of God. Many are thirsty, thirsty for the righteousness of Christ. Remember He said, 'Blessed are they who thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.' We can see a thirsting for righteousness in the world, as this righteous judgment is disappearing out of the world and we see the judgment of man taking its place. We do not in the spirit see too many who are not clothed, but we acknowledge and know that this is the raiment of righteousness.

Many are seeking. They feel they are naked, they feel they cannot stand before God. They feel they cannot even stand before mankind. We see suicide rates at such a high level because people feel ashamed in their lives, they are hungering and they need to be clothed with the word of God and the righteousness of Christ. We see many in prison who have imprisoned themselves by the ways of this world. They see no way out and they need to be told of this wonderful gospel message and there is a way that will lead to the Kingdom of God. There is a way!

We see the sick are not being visited. Spiritually sick people everywhere who need an uplift, they need a visit from the greatest physician of all times. They need a simple prayer to be made for them. The need to understand that they do not have to think that it is the end because of this sickness, that there is a brightness and a way before them if they will come unto the Lord.

We see all of these things that are needed. They will be the things that we will be judged righteously by the Lord with, and we must be alerted that we must not only bring thanksgiving in voice, we must not only bring praise on our lips, we must allow it to enter deep within our hearts and be serious about the great blessing that we have been given by being part of the church, and then we must look and see those who have not yet received this blessing and we must make a determined effort through prayer and offering, and physical work where it is possible, to allow them also to be judged righteously on the day when our Lord returns.

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TEXT – Luke 12:39.

*"And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through."*

I find myself on the return journey from Confirmation classes in Berne. Between catering to the "inner man" and exchanging ideas with the parents, the time just flew, and so it has become late. It is going on for midnight. The petrol gauge stands at the reserve mark. Already on the way over, I told myself: "call at the next Service Station". I approach the motorway, and comfort myself: there's at least ten litres left, which should see me home. But naturally, I determine to refill at the first opportunity. Calmly and uninterrupted I drive on. No Service Station in sight. Then on a slight left turn, the motor starts to splutter. Impossible! The gauge still shows fuel! After the turn, the motor restarts. There - once again all is well. Where is the Service Station? I sit as though on "needles", still, the car runs and slowly I becalm myself. But suddenly another splutter. Although the reserve shows fuel, the motor dies. Should I call the emergency station? No; for if I tell him I have no petrol in the tank, I will be fined. I let the car roll, on to the break down strip and switch the warning blinker on. Silence. Hardly any traffic. What do I do? None of the few speeding passersby stop. It's clear, they want to be in bed, as soon as possible. I too. "Dear God, I beg, it's up to you, help me in my predicament! It's dangerous here and nowhere to stay overnight. Lord, I believe; help my unbelief! Amen. Try the starter again - nothing! Twice, three times, four, five times - nothing. Tears are close. Can't speak any more, only silently, waiting, praying. Eventually, I try it again. The motor springs to life! Unbelievable! A miracle! Quickly, as long as the motor runs - away from here! "Dear Father, please help me, please, to the next exit. "Will it never come? The headlights fall on to a sign, "Exit 1,000m." At the exit, the motor splutters anew, comes good, then finally gives up at the village entrance. There I stand on the street. Midnight is long past. A light burns here and there in the houses. Blinkers on, and off in search of the next Service Station. The village is unfamiliar - a "sleepy hollow". There in the village square, a man is stepping into his car. I hurry; excuse me please, can you tell me where the next Service Station is? "Follow me", I can't, I have no petrol." He alights from his car, opens the overflowing boot and endeavours to "dig out" his petrol can, without success. He asks where my car is; says, "I'll drive home, unload the boot, and be back in ten minutes." - You're an angel, sent from Heaven." The man waves tiredly and drives off. Reflecting, I go back to my car. Hopefully, he'll come back! Again I try, but the starter won't even turn now. And what good is the petrol now? I become angry with myself. Neither petrol can or jump lead on board. I'm ashamed of myself. How could I have been so careless? My "angel" returns, and puts the petrol in. "Now start, and follow me to the Service Station. "Many thanks." - I start the motor: click! The man hears and is astounded "That also; have you a jump lead?" "Sorry, no", I meekly say. "Man, you must have faith in God or luck; I have one," and rummaged for a torch. Silently, we attach it to the batteries. It works. I breathe a sigh of relief and send a "thank you" up above. We drive to the Service Station, and I fill up. This man has earned a generous tip. He firmly refuses. "Just pay me for the petrol, 10 francs for 10 litres; more I will not take." I insist: "Man, you are truly an angel, what would I have done without you; take at least ten-fold." - "That's out of the question. I'm human too, and should such misfortune happen to me, I hope I would meet someone like you also." - "I can't promise, I would be on the spot." He laughs. "Good night and arrive home safely." - "Heartfelt thanks and God reward you." At home tired, but overjoyed and satisfied, I bend my knee; "Thank you, Lord, for all I've experienced, and for your wonderful lesson, thanks." And the moral of the story? On the coming morn, I will drive to a car accessories shop: - "a petrol can and jump lead please." No faith, you think? No, Luke 22:46, "Lest ye enter into temptation" But naturally, neither petrol can or jumper lead can replace the "Oil", so also have oil with you! In a spiritual sense, the words of the Lord ring clear in my mind in Luke 12:40. "Be ye therefore ready also: for the son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

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TEXT – Romans 1:3-4.

*“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”*

The text reminds us of the great blessing restored again to the earth where we have the opportunity to once again be called sons and daughters of God, an opportunity that was lost to mankind with the downfall of Adam, for Adam was the son of God the Scripture tells us. We find that in the genealogies listed from Adam through to Christ in the Scriptures, and in the last part of that the genealogies go back to those that were close at the creation. We can read in Luke Chapter 3. *Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.* We see God recognised Adam as His son, and had he not fallen into sin all the generations thereafter would have inherited that wonderful blessing to be sons and daughters of God, and would have been blessed down through the ages: but that was lost to mankind, until God created a second man which was our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin to come into the world as the Son of man again, because He had to be adopted into the world, and that adoption we know was done through Joseph and Mary. We can confirm that in the Scriptures, where our Lord when He went to the temple when He was twelve years old and His parents were concerned, and when they found Him He said - Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business, but it then records in the Scriptures that He put Himself under their care. That is an adoption in our day of grace, where there is a child which is not of the direct bloodlines but is drawn unto the adoption of those parents and they care for that child as though it were their own. Our Lord then was adopted into the world as the Son of man.

We read He was in the world, but the world knew Him not. We are in the world and the world knows us not. There is no difference, everyone looks the same. The only way the world could have known that our Lord was from God was if they had believed and followed His virtues that He did. It is the same in the Church today. The world can witness that we indeed have something different, if the virtues that we show to the world by our deeds and actions are such that it shows there is a difference. This restoration took place again back in the world when our Lord came out of the grave. He came out of the grave; the first person recorded seeing Him was Mary the sinner, and we can see His declaration to the world at that time which should give us great hope, for we find written in John Chapter 20 verse 11 on as follows: *"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them. I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."* We see there the declaration that now Christ could once again through this resurrection be called the Son of God, and not only Him but He said to Mary – My Father, and your Father. Now the opportunity was there again. The restoration had been made through that great sacrifice where the sins of the world had been taken away and mankind could now begin a new start in the love of Christ.

This is an opportunity for each and every one of us to come to our Lord and confess our sins, and receive from Him the adoption. Once again, we cannot just demand; it just does not happen. It is like a spiritual adoption where we are accepted by the Heavenly Father to be His sons and His daughters. With all adoptions there has to be some agreements. Of course the agreement in this case is that each time we repent for our sins He then will agree that we then are in a position to be adopted to be His sons and His daughters.

We then need to go on to the step of regeneration which we know happens through the blessings and Sacraments that He has left for the Church. In this regeneration we then take on a new being we might say, it is a spiritual being within us. There is still the fleshly being and there is the spiritual. We know that if we follow the flesh then we suffer the penalties of the flesh, but if we follow the spiritual guidance within us that is given through the power of the Holy Spirit we can then remain as sons and daughters of God. The great blessing is that our Lord knows that it is not possible for us, for He lived on this earth as an adopted son of man. He saw and experienced Himself how difficult it is to maintain that constant connection to God. He achieved it through the power of the Holy Spirit within Him, but He knows how difficult it is. Each time we slip but then we come back, it creates that ability for a great celebration in heaven that my son again has returned to me. This can only be done through grace, and it is a wonderful blessing that we can receive in our lives. It enables us to be heirs to that great promise of the Kingdom of God.

TEXT – Genesis 24-56.

*“And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.”*

These are the words of Abraham's servant who was seeking a bride for Isaac. They were addressed to the people in the bride's surroundings. We are familiar with this event. With God's help and grace Abraham's servant found Rebekah as a bride for his master's son. Having been successful, nothing could keep him from returning home. His thoughts and wishes were directed towards home and his master to whom he speedily wanted to bring the adorned bride. And Rebekah was prepared to go with him and leave all former things like her ancestral surroundings, her family and friends.

From a spiritual perspective the apostolate is taking us as Jesus bride to the Master. 2 Corinthians 11:2 “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” No one among us experience exactly the same things as the other. We have different natures and live in different circumstances. A foundation for a wonderful development has been laid within all of us. We are to be prepared to belong to Jesus bride at His return. The objective of our journey is to be united with our bridegroom, Jesus Christ. Here the example of Rebekah is apt again. What does it mean to "go to the master". We earnestly strive to let this mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus.’ (Philippians 2:5). This is demonstrated by our faith, deeds, conduct, and nature.

Moreover, it is imperative that we do not allow ourselves to be detained. Our surroundings in the broadest sense or our conduct could be a hindrance. We must not allow even well meant offers to keep us from pursuing the goal of our faith. Habits, inclinations, interests, and traditions of which we have grown fond must not hinder our spiritual development. We want to overcome those traits and peculiarities which are inappropriate for Jesus bride.

God prospers our way. He helps and blesses our genuine intentions and efforts. The bridegroom of our soul will also come to meet us. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4: 16-18).

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TEXT – Zechariah 8:23.

*“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”*

Our text for today tells us of the birth of the Church, the beginning of the Christian Church where on the day of Pentecost the work began, the first day of the week, and that is why we celebrate the first day of the week as our church day.

We know that the Apostles had been given a commission, but they had no idea how they would be able to fulfil this until the power of the Holy Spirit came upon them and they were then able to testify to all of those people who had gathered there for the Jewish festival, Jews from every nation of the world and they heard this wonderful message in their own tongues. This was already foretold in our text. That man was our Lord Jesus. So, the work began, and we can look back today, and we can see how far the Lord of the Harvest has extended that work within the world. Sometimes in the history of the church this work was frustrated and tried to direct to new foundations, and that was the foundations of men, but through the power of this Spirit all of these things were overcome, and we see today how this Gospel message of salvation is being taken into the world in various ways by the Lord of the Harvest.

It can be in a grand scale as we have witnessed recently with a Royal wedding where millions of people viewed that, and all were told very clearly what a Christian wedding was all about and how we need to take Christ into that marriage. It can be a simple conversion of one person where in an isolated place, but the work goes on, and the fulfilment that this would happen was brought about through the words of the prophet's years before.

The prophet Hosea saw and witnessed that this would happen 800 years before the event took place. The prophet Hosea was sent to the children of Israel to tell them that the Lord was not pleased with them, that they were prostituting His ways and His laws. He was told to go and marry a prostitute as a symbol, which was what God thought of the Jewish nation at that time, and as he had children he was told to name them certain names which was a signal to the Jewish nation of what God thought of them, and we find written in Hosea Chapter 1 verses 8-11 as follows: *"Now when he had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Juda and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel."* We see that it was prophesied that where the children of Israel were being told they were no longer God's people, it would also come to pass that they would be told and given the opportunity to be the sons and daughters of God, and that place was the very place, a street called Strait in Jerusalem, where both of these events took place. We see that all the tribes of the Jewish nation forgot about who should be their king and who should be their leader, and they appointed Christ to be the head over them for the future. Great shall be the day of Jezreel it was recorded.

If we follow that hundreds of years before we will find that there were two kings, one in Judah and one in Israel, and they both wanted to vie for the throne but they had both begun to follow Baal the false god, the one more than the other. God had spoken to the one and said that he should agree with the other one, that there should be a great national day where all the people who believed in Baal should come together and he should then exercise vengeance upon them on his behalf. We can read in the Scriptures, where thousands of people gathered at a temple of Baal and they went in to worship these false gods, and the king who had been commissioned with the way to stop this and bring about the vengeance of God had his soldiers wait outside and when everyone was in he ordered them to go in and slay all of these believers in false gods. It was termed the valley of blood. There was so much blood there at the time, but now the prophet Hosea said that that would come to an end, that now there would not need to be the slaying of people who followed after false gods, that now the Spirit would come within the world, this Holy Spirit that would go out into the world and would convert their hearts so that they too could see the futility of worshipping a false god, and they too could be converted and become sons and daughters of God. What a blessing! No longer does blood have to be spilt to bring about this conversion. It now comes about through the working of the Holy Spirit.

We all at some time in our life begin to worship earthly items, but we are blessed that the Holy Ghost intervenes and corrects us. This is a blessing granted us from the Lord.

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TEXT – Revelation 5:1-8

*“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.”*

The nature of the world and history is revealed in the book of Revelation. In the middle of everything in the heavenly throne room sits God who eludes all description. We learn from elders in white robes, and from the seven spirits of God, like a sea of glass crystal is lit. The People of God and people from all nations are around the throne. He that is above all conceivable is exalted. In the middle is the Lamb who was slain, angels and heavenly beings.

Just one question: who is worthy to receive the sealed book and open it, and to loose the seals thereof.

The focus of today's text is our Lord Jesus Christ. The Romans wanted to have Him forgotten but God has anointed and increased. He is described as the lamb, because the cry of the lambs in the reputation of the defenseless, and the blood of lambs at the exodus of the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt on the one hand, a sign of the exemption, but also, to some extent was a sign of resistance against death.

The Book of Revelation, with its numerous visions were written at a time when the Christians were exposed to a first great persecution by Emperor Domitian.

In the book of Revelation, these difficult times in the larger context of the history of the world, and thus at the same time, found comfort and strength for the communities, because: **The revelation flows into God's victory over the powers of evil. In the end, the new world of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, without tears, suffering and death!**

In reading, we learn that God guides the destiny of the world. In His right hand He holds the book with seven seals. In Him is the fullness, what will happen in the future. The Seven Seals therefore protect the secrets of the Almighty.

An angel with a loud voice calls for someone who is worthy to open the book.

A deep silence, no great man - even angels are not worthy. Who then?

There is only one worthy - only the One who is the winner of the Cross, the Bible speaks in images: *It is Jesus Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the crucified and resurrected by the power of God.*

He alone has the power to decode the book. He alone is worthy to take over this function.

As a result, all around the throne, all join in a great hymn.

All creatures of God begin the worship of the Lamb and He who sits on the throne.

**Only praise, honor and glory to be heard for ever and ever!**

The question arises, what is the point of such fantastic visions for us today. The course of our world is also for us today a mysterious book. One could weep, just as it was John the seer to weep.

We do not know how to explain why there is hunger, suffering, misery and war on earth. It remains a mystery why murder and homicide and hatred in many corners of the world are the order of the day. Even our own way is not certain to us.

Speculation will not help us to understand further the course of world history. But one thing that we can do, and that is to be in unity with those who stand around the throne of God and give Him blessing and honour and glory and power.

Then we belong to those who are in front of the present, and we are not afraid of because of our trust in God; the fate of the world is in His hands.

As in the hymn: “God sitteth in the regiments and brings to all the good”.

In spite of painful conditions, He creates a new earth and a new heaven; then will the tabernacle of God be with men.

It should reflect our faith, if we have a firm grip under our feet we will also be able to resist the temptations of principalities and powers and remain truly free.