

Sing¹ beforehand: Versification of Revelation 7:9-17

1-

*Toe staar ek deur die wêreldnagte
- lighoogtes het my oog geboei -,
en 'k sien² uit alle mensgeslagte
'n skaar, ontelbaar, saamgevloei.
Hul staan, uit alle volke en lande,
nou voor die Lam en voor Gods troon,
die vredespalmtak in die hande,
hul wit gewaad in eenvoud skoon.*

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth³. Beloved, grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ⁴. By the powerful operation of God the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Psalm 33:1

-1-

Rejoice! Sing praise to your Creator,
For it is good to praise the LORD.
Make music with guitar and trumpet;
Blend skillfully each note and word.
All God's words are truthful.
All his works are faithful
He loves righteousness.
To the earth and heavens
Constant care is given
With unfailing love.

Confession of faith: Apostolicum

After the law, we answer with Psalm 16:5.

Law

Psalm 16:5

5-

Therefore I now rejoice with heart and soul;
My flesh shall rest secure in Thy protection.
Thou wilt not leave me down in dark Sheol,
Nor let Thy Holy One there see corruption.
With Thee full joy and bliss are ever present;
The fullness of Thy right hand is most pleasant.

Prayer.

Psalm 46:5

-5-

"Be still and know, all you who bide Me,
That I am God, and none beside Me.
I am exalted, and My might
Makes haughty nations flee in fright
. In all the earth I am exalted;
By Me your enemies are halted!"

¹ <http://www.genevanpsalter.com/>,

² After these things I **saw**, and behold, a great multitude, (Rev 7:9 ASV)

³ Psalm 124:8

⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:3

The LORD of hosts is on our side:
With Jacob's God we safely hide.

Scripture reading: Mark 8:22 - 38.

Text: Mark 8:37, 38

³⁷Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. (Mr 8:37-38 KJV)

What shall man be able to give in exchange for his life?

How much of God's council do we truly understand? To what extent is each one of us here present prepared to deny himself in order that the honour of our Lord Jesus may increase in his life?

- 1. The Lord opens our eyes.**
- 2. How far did the disciples see?**
- 3. Untill where are we able to see?**

1. The Lord opens our eyes.

All the things which we have read, are linked to the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida.

- The reason for it's significance, is that the Lord opened this man's eyes so that he could see what was going on around him.
- Immediately thereafter the Lord tests His disciples and the multitude accompanying them to Caesarea Philippi, to see if their spiritual eyes were blind, and if they could see by means thereof.

The Lord did also not fix the blind man's eyes all at once.

- He did it in two phases. Initially the man could see only vaguely.
- After the Lord spat on his eyes, and put His hands on his eyes, the man said that he could see men as trees, walking.
- He could discern only their outlines and it reminded him of how trees felt to him when he was still blind.

What the Lord here demonstates is that the more He works with us, the more our insight increases.

- Therefore the Lord again put His hands upon the man's eyes.
- When the Lord then asked him again if he could now see better, he answered that he could see beter than normal people could.
- The older translation still reads that the man could see people who were far off very clearly. Which is to say that he could clearly see far-off things.

In the passage immediately hereafter the Lord shows that it works exactly the same way with our religeous life. It comes to the fore in the peoples' answers to Jesus' question to them about Who He is.

The people surrounding Jesus at the time, realised that He was no ordinary man. They realised that He was more than them, but initially they could not say exactly how that is.

It comes out in their answers.

- There were those who said that Jesus was John the Baptist.
- Then there were those who claimed that Jesus was Elijah.
- A third group thought that He had to be some or other prophet.

The peoples' insight was similar to the blind man's when he at first started to see, when he told the Lord that the people looked like trees. They have some *realisation* of who Jesus is, but they cannot see who He is!

2. How far did the disciples see?

Then Jesus tested the disciples: Who do you say that I am?

- The Lord does not want to again know who the multitude who were not taught by Him say that He is.
- He wants to know what the people say with whom He has been labouring long, and to whom He has revealed much. How strong are their spiritual eyes by now?

Peter answered on behalf of the disciples: You are the Christ.

- Christ is the Greek word for the Hebrew word Messiah.
- They thought that the Messiah is their king who was to come.
- But they had no conception what Jesus being the Messiah entails.
- They recognised only the one side of the Messiah, namely His eternal royalty.

Therefore the Lord Jesus then directly links up with Peter's confession.

- In His instruction (revelation), the Lord Jesus then starts to reveal to them a new element of His Messiahship of which they were up till then still unaware: that He had to be rejected, to suffer, be killed, and rise from the dead.
- The rejection will be complete: elders, chief priests and scribes.
- Which is the totality of the leadership of the church of that time.

The Lord here alludes to what is written in Psalm 118: 22, namely that the stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

- To be the Messiah, He must first be rejected.
- Not merely must He be rejected by men - He must also be killed.

In His instruction the Lord links up with another pronouncement in the Old Testament, namely Daniel 7:13.

- There it is spoken of that "the Son of man" is brought before the Ancient of days, and there receives the eternal kingdom.
- Naturally what is described here in Daniel is a prophecy / foretelling of the Lord Jesus, and consequently Jesus uses the name "Son of man" when speaking of Himself.

Now Jesus, as it were, explains what it means when it is written in Daniel that He is brought before God's throne.

- In His suffering Jesus appeared before God's throne, because He was punished for our sin.
- This is what it means that He had to go and appear there.
- Only thereafter did He receive the eternal sovereignty, when He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven..

Petrus could not accept these things.

- He could not accept that the Messiah of God had to suffer!

- He sought a triumphant King!

He takes the Lord aside and admonishes Him.

- Peter does not speak on his own behalf.
- From verse 33 it is clear that the disciples had decided on this matter together, and that Peter was then appointed as the informant, probably because just moments before he conveyed their confession to Jesus.

The Lord rebukes Peter very severely.

- But not Peter alone, because the Lord turns around and looks at all the disciples.
- We must have a very good grasp of this sentence in the Bible,. Even though Peter admonishes Jesus aside, the Lord publicly rebukes Peter; it is clear that everyone heard what Jesus said to him: " But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter"

Get thee behind me, Satan: At that moment Peter was the instrument of the devil, and his "rebuke" was nothing other than a satanic temptation. Other than the blind man, Peter and the disciples did not yet clearly see "far-off".

The "temptation" of Peter-and-them, that the Messiah was not meant to be rejected and killed, is connected to the temptation in the desert when the devil said to Jesus that He merely had to worship him, and then he would give to Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. It is thus clear that the devil did not want Jesus to go to the cross.

In the read passage, a turn came about in Jesus' Messiahship. From this moment He was also the Lonely One.

3. Till where can we see?

Men with human insight cannot see that the Messiah had to suffer - according to our logic it is absurd.

- But Jesus knew the path which leads to death, and He also knew it as a part of God's council, and from this moment onwards He moved towards that point in God's council.
- Then Jesus gathered everyone present.
 - He starts to explain what it means to be Messiah.
 - The first matter about which He speaks is: "Whoever will come after me.."
 - The same words are used of disciples or pupils who follow a certain person, and are taught by that person -such as Paul who was taught by Gamaliel.

Here however, it means a great deal more.

- Here it means that you recognise all the Messiah's demands as the demands of the Sovereign of all life, and that you follow Him as a citizen follows his king. (Vgl. Jehu se woorde in 2 Konings 9:18, 19)

¹⁸So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again. ¹⁹Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. (2 Konings 9:18-19 AFR1953)

- You must follow Jesus not only with regards to what He demands of you - you must dedicate your entire life to Him.

Thereafter the Lord speaks of ...**let him deny himself**...

- This part is connected with the announcement of the suffering of the Messiah.
- You can follow the Lord only if you deny yourself.
- The meaning is that you must lay down your own impulse (nature).
 - An example of someone who could not do so is the rich young man, who could not lay down his own avarice in order to follow Jesus.

Futhermore it means that you are to not award to your own insights a place which it does not rightly occupy, because you are to completely rely on the Messiah's insight.

- When Peter admonishes Jesus with regards to His announcement of His rejection and death, he is precisely such an example.

Then there is still one further aspect: who wishes to know Jesus, must ...**take up his cross**...

- To **take up the cross** was a much severer matter for the Lord Jesus than it is for any man.
- The people there realised that it meant hardship for them if they wished to believe in the Jesus the Messiah.
- Because of their faith the pressures of life, the hardship of life and the suffering of life will result, and they will be required to manage / handle it.
 - As a man, the Lord Jesus also underwent all of these things, but in addition He also knew that He would literally have to carry His cross up Golgotha, and that the people would there crucify Him.

In closing Jesus says: ...**follow me**... Follow in my foot steps: faith and suffering and obedience to God the Father.

- Like Jesus, we must also be absolutely obedient, He was absolutely obedient to the Father, even unto death, just so, we must be obedient.
- If we must suffer for the Lord Jesus, then we must be prepared to do so, because He suffered tremendously for our sake – so that we could get into heaven.

The Lord thus says that we must be able to see that He is the only Redeemer.

- Man and his attempts to save himself are here placed in direct opposition to Jesus Christ's work of redemption.
- Any person who wishes to save his life himself, will loose it completely.
- Anyone who wishes to withdraw himself from from the Lord Jesus and His Gospel, shall loose his life.
- The reason is simple: Such a person cannot lay claim to Jesus' work of redemption, and will therefore go to hell.

The Lord presents the choice thus: Our choice for Him is to one side and the love of the world to the other.

- One can also not claim that one adheres to Jesus as Saviour, but you do not meet the demands which He sets for your following of Him.
- If you choose to not have Jesus as Saviour, because you cannot see your way open to meet the demands which He places on you – or whatever the reason you may wish to present - it simply means that you choose in favour of this world and what it has to offer.

The world ends in a blind alley.

- The world can offer no way out of the Lord's punishment.

- It cannot unlock the council (of redemption) of the Lord, so that you may see.

Therefore the Lord Jesus asks: What can a man pay in exchange for his soul, to save it? What ransom can he offer to completely free himself from God's punishment?

- What is a ransom?
 - Ransom is an amount of money paid for someone's release from jail, or with which to purchase a slave's freedom.
 - It is a sum paid so that the injustice which exists, can be completely cancelled out. A ransom is thus a legal satisfaction.

How well do your soul's eyes see?

- Can you understand that we must follow Jesus by suffering for our faith?
- Can you also see that we must lay down all forms of arrogance and conceit and humbly resign ourselves to believe what He reveals, even though we may not understand it?
- To follow Jesus the Messiah in His royalty and redemption, one must also be prepared to follow Him in His suffering and rejection.
- If we are ashamed to do so, then Jesus is going to reject us.
- He says that in heaven, where absolute justice applies, He will be ashamed of us, because we did not want to comply with the standards which He set for us.

He also states it quite clearly that the moment of rejection occurs in the Final Judgement.

- This is when He comes in the splendour of his Devine royalty.
- He says it in different words: ... **cometh in the glory of his Father...**
- The angels are then also present.

It means that your humiliation, being rejected by Jesus because you were not able to follow Him, will be tremendous because all the inhabitants of heaven will also witness it.

The Lord asks us to see **far and clear** into His council.

- Then we will be able to see that it is not necessary for Jesus to be ashamed of us, if in our worship of Him, we now already follow Him as much in His suffering and rejection as in His royalty.
- Then we will come to see that if we wish to go and stand before the Lord on our own, that we do not have any ransom to pay when the Last Judgment comes. But we will also be able to see that we do not need it, because Jesus has already paid the ransom.

Live and believe, because the Lord Jesus has already paid the ransom.

Follow Him also in your suffering as He expects of you, and in He royalty He will raise you to live in His kingdom forever.

Amen.

Prayer.

Psalm 9:1, 5, 6.

1-
Wholehearted thanks I give you, Lord,
I will tell of your wondrous deeds.
In you will I exult and be glad;
O Most High, I will sing your praises.

-5-

God is a stronghold for the weak
And a refuge in troubled times.
Called by your name, our trust is in you,
You've not forsaken those who seek You.
-6-

Sing songs of praise to Zion's LORD,
tell the nations of all his works.
He who avenges will remember,
he is not deaf to the afflicted.

¹⁴The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.⁵

Amen.

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Date: 18 April 2010

⁵ 2 Corinthians 13:14