

RELIGION

Scripture of the Week

Romans 2:1-4

Insight on the Word: The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth!

BY MICHAEL LINDSEY,
Dean of North Portland Bible College

The Bible text for next week's Sunday School lesson comes from two passages: Revelation 15:2-4 and 19:4-8. This is the last in a series on Prayers and Songs of the Bible, which has taken us on a quick tour through the whole Scripture. Beginning next week, through Resurrection Sunday (eight lessons), we will review events in the life of Christ from the Gospel of Mark.

Did you know that there are a host of hymns and songs in the Book of Revelation? We often avoid preaching or teaching the Revelation because of its difficult symbolic passages, and because Christians seem to be so divided on the proper framework for interpretation, not to mention the meaning of particular scripture passages. But the Revelation is attested very early in Church history as a divinely inspired book. Its message was intended to teach us and encourage us in the midst of trials and persecution, and we shouldn't ignore it.

It is exciting to focus on the songs of praise in the Revelation, and meditate on their truths. In fact, the songs and hymns serve to explain some of the difficult symbols in the rest of the book, and give us a clear understanding of its meaning for today. Before we look closely at our texts for this week, let's review the songs in other parts of Revelation.

In the vision of the throne of the

Almighty (Rev. 4-5), there are five songs recorded, each with a larger "choir" than the one before. First, the "four beats" or "living creatures" (NIV) sing a continual chorus of "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty" (4:8). Then the "24 elders" declare "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power..." (4:11). Both these songs have become hymns and scripture choruses for our churches. They declare the greatness of our heavenly Father, the Creator.

In the fifth chapter, the Lion/Lamb appears to unseal the book (actually a scroll) of human destiny (this is my interpretation of it). Before he begins to break the seals, John hears a series of praises to the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. The singers of the first two songs combine to praise the Lamb: he is worthy, like the Father on the throne, of praise and worship.

The Lamb's death was the necessary atonement sacrifice, to purchase people for God's Kingdom, who would come from every ethnic and linguistic group on the whole planet (5:9-10). We can trace this concept from Genesis 12 through the whole Bible; those who are committed to bringing the blessing of salvation to every people group around the world are known today as "World Christians." Are you one of them?

These living creatures and elders are then joined by myriads of angels in a wondrous chorus (which modern believers have also set to music): "Worthy

is the Lamb that was slain..." (5:12). Then John "hears" every creature in all creation praising both the Father and the Son, lifting them in glory together (5:13). Such praise is worthy for the Lamb of God, because he shares the divine essence of God.

Later we read of John's vision of an innumerable multitude of people, saved out of every people (7:9), faithful martyrs of the final persecution of the people of God (7:14). John heard them singing (7:10), the response of the heavenly hosts (7:12), and a hymn of one "elder" concerning the Christian multitude at peace in heaven (7:15-17). This last song is not obvious to readers of the King James Version; I would suggest the NIV for comparison.

In Chapter 11 we hear (with John) two more hymns of praise from heaven. These resound from the seventh trumpet (11:15, 16-18), and declare the end of "the kingdoms of this world" and the establishment of "the kingdom of our Lord [the Father] and of his Christ [his Son, the Messiah]." In phrases which recall Psalm 2, the heavenly elders rejoice in the breaking down of the political forces of the world, the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and rewards for the faithful servants of God in all ages (11:18).

In chapter 12 another hymn celebrates the victory of Christ over Satan, a victory which includes the overpowering power of the saints (12:10-12). It explains the timing and meaning of the

"war in heaven" between Satan and Michael the archangel (12:7-9). Christ's death and resurrection have judged Satan and brought an end to his ability to accuse the saints in heaven (Job 1-2; John 12:31). But that doesn't mean he is not still very active on earth (1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:12).

And this brings us to our first text on the lesson, Rev. 15:2-4. Here we stand on the brink of the final judgments on the nations of the earth, the seven vials of God's wrath (15:1; 16:1). But before the vials (bowls) are poured out, we hear the victory song of the redeemed. Each line seems to recall a phrase out of the Psalms and Prophets, praising God's works and character. It could well be that this passage relates to a time after the saints have been martyred for their faith, or caught up out of the earth by the Lord.

It is hard for us to relate to their rejoicing, for many things in the world seem to be morally neutral, useful or even beautiful. We hate to think that all nature and human cultural achievements will be burned up and destroyed (compare 2 Pet. 3:7, 10-13). But that is the whole point of the final judgments. This whole planet is so infested with evil that it must be finally destroyed, in order for God's judgments to be truly just. This theme is reiterated in the midst of the vial judgments (16:5-7) in more songs of praise for the Lord's righteous judgments.

The final passage of hymns of praise

are the real Hallelujah Choruses of chapter 19:1-8. First, the Lord is praised for bringing to an ignominious end the "great whore," called "Babylon the Great." I believe this represents the counterfeit forms of Christian faith, both inside and outside of established churches, which have compromised their obedience to Christ by alliance with the political powers of the world.

But after that judgment is all over, the wedding feast of the Lamb can take place. The wife of the Lamb (the saints) stands ready to meet her Lover. She is arrayed in "fine linen, clean and white," a beauty which comes from her righteous deeds. Unlike the false religious system, adorned in purple and scarlet, symbols of riches and exploitation of the poor (18:16), the true bride of Christ wants only to please her Lord. Indeed, the Lamb should be glorified even in his bride, for he purchased her with his own precious blood, and her garments of righteous deeds would be filthy rags (Is. 64:6) without his atonement.

All these songs of praise characterize the glory of heaven, and give us a sense of the excitement of our eternal destiny in heaven. All our praises here on earth are only a little taste of the glory of heaven. If you don't enjoy singing praises and testifying to the goodness of our God, maybe you wouldn't enjoy heaven! Do you really know who he is? He is worthy to be praised, and praising the Lord is exciting!

Greater Solid Rock COGIC Presents Youth Crusade

The HeavenBound Gospel Music Ministry is sponsoring their first annual "Youth On Fire Crusade" as an effort to save the youth of our communities.

The crusade will begin Tuesday, February 25, 1992 and conclude Sunday, March 1, 1992 at 7:00 p.m. nightly. All services will be held at the Greater Solid Rock COGIC, 1705 N.E. Dekum. Bishop A. R. Hopkins is the host pastor. The closing service on Sunday will begin at 3:00 p.m.

Saturday night is designated as the City-Wide Musical night with guests from all over the area. The speakers each night are also from various congregations throughout the city. The theme for the week is "Reaching Forth For The Prize."

If you need further information, you may contact Min. Lonnie L. Hosley or Bro. Fredric Warren at the church (503) 283-1524.

Biblical Laws Superior

To the editor:

The potential sentencing in the Michael Tyson case surely shows the inestimable superiority of the Biblical laws over typical secular ones in all such circumstances: "If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes her and lays with her, and they are found, then the man who lay with her shall give to the father of the young woman fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has violated her; he may not put her away all his days." (Deut. 22:28-29).

This is fair; decades of imprisonment is not. It would be hard to find a more telling example of the urgency of our returning to the Biblical perspective.

Shalom Always!
Dr. Paterson Brown
Eugene, OR

Jesus Loves You!
Allen Temple CME Church
Psalm 34:3
4236 NE Eighth Avenue
(corner of 8th & Skidmore)
Portland, Oregon 97211
(503) 287-0261
Phillip S. Nelson Pastor

The Bethel
Cathedral Choir
Presents
*"Once upon a time...
when we were colored."*
an evening of
"Negro Spirituals"
Narration by Beverly Anderson
on
Sunday, February 23, 1992
at 4:00 p.m.
at
Bethel A.M.E. Church
5828 N.E. 8th Avenue
Portland, Oregon
Mrs. Betty White, President
Mrs. Roehelle McElroy, Director
Rev. Dorsey McCullough, Pastor

North Portland Bible College Second Annual Musical

Saturday, February 29, 7:30 p.m.

"Let us exalt His Name together."
Psalm 34:3

at
Bethel A.M.E. Church
5828 N.E. 8th Avenue
Rev. Dorsey McCullough,
Host Pastor

with
Choirs, soloists, ensembles,
including:
Vancouver Ave. First Baptist
Children's Choir
Immanuel Christian Fellowship
Youth Choir
Julia Black, "Lifters of His Name,"
Tamara Barnett
Rev. and Mrs. Dorsey McCullough
Bethel A.M.E. Cathedral Choir, with
Virginia Champion
Allen Temple Men's Chorus
A freewill offering will be received
for the benefit of the college.

For further information:
Call Lillian Jenkins, 285-0089, or the
college, 288-2919, 287-0885
This event is sponsored by
North Portland Bible College
Our community's own center for
Biblical studies and practical ministry
training
Temporarily located in Berean
Baptist Church, 4822 N. Vancouver

Revised Announcement Fashion Show

"Keep Your Head to the Sky: From
the Beautiful Women with Love"


February 29, 1992

Portland Community College,
Cascade Campus
For Project Independence
705 N. Killingsworth
Cascade Hall Auditorium
4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Suggested Donation: \$5.00 students;
\$8.00 General Public

**Mallory Avenue
Christian Church**
Disciples of Christ
God's Presence promises
Power through Jesus Christ in
Good Times and Bad Times
Matthew 11:28
"Come to me all you who are
weary and heavy laden and I
will give you rest"
9:45am Sunday School
11:00am Morning Worship
7:30pm Tuesday Bible
Study and Prayer
Inter-racial Congregation
126 N.E. Alberta + Portland, OR 97211 + (503) 288-5173

Denise A. Bell, Pastor

**LET THE ARMY RESERVE
PAY YOUR STUDENT LOAN.**

Awards Army Reserve unit needs bright
people to train in certain specialized skills.
In return, we're willing to help pay off a
qualified student loan - up to \$20,000. You
could also qualify for another \$18,000 for
college expenses - all for part-time service.
Usually one week a month plus two
weeks Annual Training.
Think about it. Then think
about us. Then call.
282-2120 or
223-6734
**BE ALL YOU CAN BE
ARMY RESERVE**

**Vinyl Siding
Installed on Your Home
by Experts**
Call ABS inc.
283-0348
BB#9291
Financing Available


**MALLORY
CHURCH OF CHRIST**
3908 NE MALLORY AVENUE

Minister Gregory Fobbs
SUNDAY SCHEDULE
Bible Study
9:30 am.
Morning Worship
10:45 am.
Men's Training Leadership
Women's Bible Class
5:00 pm.
Evening Worship
6:00 pm.
Attended nursery for all
services
Wednesday prayer meeting
and bible study
7:30 pm.
Radio Ministry Each Sunday, 11:00 AM - KBMS
288-1092
RESTORING
NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

**St. Paul Missionary
Baptist Church**
8101 N. Fiske Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97203
Church Phone: 289-0147 Study Phone: 289-1911
**Sunday Service
10:45**
**Sunday School
9:30**
**Bible Study
6:00**
**Evening Service
7:00 P.M.**

Pastor, Rev. James C.E. Faulkner
**Theme: Whatever you're going to do
for the Lord, do it now**
I Peter 4:11

Jesus Christ Is Salvation
Union Avenue Baptist Church
5029 N. E. MLK Jr. Blvd.
Portland, OR 97211
Telephone Number - 287-8344
He that is too good to realize that he need to be saved, cannot be
helped. But he that recognize he has a need, can be helped.
What A Friend We Have In Jesus
Are you a friend of Jesus?
Do you want Jesus to be your friend?
We want to be your friend and would love to have you as our
friend.
Everyone is welcome to this church, (the body of Christ).
There is a place and a work here for you.
Rev. A. G. May, Pastor


**MT OLIVET
BAPTIST CHURCH**
*Has moved Sunday services to
Stone Tower Church,
N.E. Sandy Blvd. & 30th*
Worship Services 8:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Church School 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
Bible Study, Wednesdays, 116 N.E. Schuyler
10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
Radio Ministry each Sunday, 8:00 a.m. on KBMS
A Teaching Church With A Reaching Ministry
Dr. James E. Martin, Senior Pastor
**Church Office 116 N.E. Schuyler St.
(503) 284-1954**