

ONLINE SERVICE

during COVID-19

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22 November 2020

Welcome and Notices

Amanda Fairs
viola

Sunday of Christ the King
Call to Worship

Prayer of Invocation

Young at Heart
Christine Bradbeer

Bible Reading: Revelation 5:6-14
Suzanne Hart

Great Texts of the Bible #16
and they were singing

Prayers of Intercession
and
The Lord's Prayer



NOTICES

22 November 2020

Wednesday 25 November 1.30 pm Sweet Hour of Prayer
Sunday 29 November 11 am Advent #1.

For your prayers this week:

Congregational member: Rodney BLACKWOOD



and



Motor Isaac and Julia YAT who minister at
refugee camps in Ethiopia.

Members who wish to continue their freewill offerings during the COVID 19 restrictions may post to our Treasurer. Vic Ansell, 59 Queen St Kangaroo Flat, Vic 3555 or use the electronic banking details below.



Electronic Banking Details: ANZ Forest Hill,
Account name: Blackburn Presbyterian Church
BSB: 013-328. Account number: 2970 40694

BLACKBURN

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Blackburn 3130



Minister: Rev Graham Bradbeer
tel. 9041 7911 mobile. 0409 978 690
Session Clerk: Mr Keith Ferres 98305466
Treasurer: Mr Vic Ansell 5447 7118

GARDENIA ST. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLACKBURN

22 November 2020



Resurrection of the Living and the Dead

Series III Nos 1-440,4

Warren Brenninger

(used with permission)

2000-08, mixed media on C type paper

WELCOME



Independent media outlets were able to operate but the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly continued to be tightly regulated. A blogger was forcibly confined to a psychiatric hospital for three months for reporting on a demonstration. Human rights defenders were prevented from registering an NGO that focused on accountability. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people (LGBTI) faced systematic discrimination, as well as violence, intimidation and harassment at the hands of police and non-state actors. Impunity for past abuses prevailed despite reforms of the criminal justice system and the closure of detention centres notorious for torture.

Amnesty International 2019

The church in Uzbekistan faces immense pressure from the government. A believer can be fined for having a Christian song on their phone. It is illegal to read or carry the Bible or other Christian materials in public.

Citizens with a Muslim background who become Christians face the most severe persecution from all directions; the government, family, friends and communities pressure believers to renounce their faith in Jesus.

Christian activities are constantly monitored by authorities. Members of churches are commonly regarded as followers of a sect who seek to spy on and destroy the current political system. The government therefore regards Christians as a threat that must be controlled and even eradicated.

Church raids occur regularly. Those present at raided gatherings may be interrogated, fined and detained for up to 15 days..

Open Doors, Australia, 2020

Great Texts of the Bible #16 Revelation 5

Sermon
Notes

John is very interested in *thrones* and uses the word x47 out of x62 in the whole New Testament. Today's Great Text from the Bible begins with a vision of the Command Centre of the Universe [aka *the throne Room of God*]. It ends with the whole universe singing.

1 An Open Door The vision of an open-door (4:1) takes us into the Throne Room of God to see what 'must happen after this'.

Life is not blind chance or fate. God is always in control despite how we may feel about things.

The throne is surrounded by four awesome creatures and a circle of 24 lesser thrones with the elders. The details are unimaginably incongruous and symbolic. Eg., 'a rainbow the colour of an emerald'. There are echoes here of Exodus 19, Ezekiel 1 and Isaiah 6:3.

We should note the treasured place of the prayers of God's people. They are not lost in a void, but treasured in golden bowls.

The elders cast their crowns (v.10) before the One on the throne. They acclaim him as worthy and worship him as Creator in their singing.

2 A Sealed Scroll The One on the throne has a scroll in his right hand (6:1). It is written on both sides and sealed with seven seals. The scroll contains human history, the destiny of the world.

Who can open the seals? "The secrets of the world belong to God and no man can pry into them. Who knows what a day or a night may bring forth? Who knows what this year holds in its dark unknown future? Even the strong angels of God are unable to open the book. Only God can unseal the seals and read the secrets of men". (Thomas F. Torrance)

John sheds tears because there is *no one worthy* to open the scroll. What is needed is not strength, or power, but worthiness. I.e., goodness is the criteria! No one is good enough.

3 Word of a Lion, vision of a Lamb Stop. *Look! The Lion from Judah's tribe* (5:5).

It is Jesus, the Jew (comes *from Judah*). Just in case you were uncertain, Jesus has already featured as central to John's Revelation.

Jesus of the line of David, is here presented as triumphant. He is qualified to open the scroll. However it is not a triumphant Lion that John sees. It is the vision of a Lamb.

The Lamb is in the centre of the throne. And it is a Lamb '*as it had been slain*'. Notice John is not viewing a dead Lamb, but one that *was dead but is alive forever* (1:18).

But what has the Victor accomplished by his death?

The answer is in the song of the living creatures. By his blood a transaction has taken place: *he has purchased a people*. His death is the atoning sacrifice for sins. This is redemption.

In the Revelation given to John sacrifice of the cross of Christ is central. The Lamb has triumphed not by killing, but by dying to redeem those who were his enemies. They become a *kingdom and priests*. The Kingdom for God, becomes a reality by his death (1:6, 5:10). All Christians are *priests* in this global enterprise.

4 Universal Singing Consider the power of a song:-

Safety Officer for the Morgan Stanley Bank, Rick Rescorla, was located on the 44th floor of the South Tower of the World Trade Center. He saw a plane crash into the North Tower and was shocked to hear the public announcement advising South Tower personnel to stay calm and remain at their work stations.

Rescorla immediately ordered an emergency evacuation. This was a routine he had rehearsed frequently, to the inconvenience and annoyance of many. As crowds began descending the many flights to the ground, in order to reduce panic, Rescorla sang. Through a bullhorn he sang the Welsh marching song, *Men of Harlech*.

Once down Rescorla re-entered the building to bring out others. He phoned his wife to reassure her of his love, and also phoned a friend to calm his wife. He was in the tower when it collapsed. Rick Rescorla saved the lives of 2,687 people. His body was never recovered.

Jesus the Messiah is the focus of the three doxologies (v.9-14) - of the 24 elders, of millions of angels and of *every creature in heaven and on earth*. The Christian Church will always sing the praise of Jesus.

The dominion of the Lamb will supplant and replace all others. He is the key to world history and human destiny.