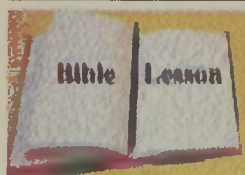


8B

RELIGION



Ascent of praise

I. Everlasting Gospel (Revelations 14:6-8)
A. Message to everyone (vv. 6,7)

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.

The scene focuses on a series of angels and their messages. We need not try to identify these angels concerning whether or not they already have had a ministry in connection with the Revelation of Jesus Christ. After all, god has a great host of angels to assist in his purposes. Remember that Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, said that he could call on “twelve legions” of angels. (Matthew 26:53)

The series of angelic messages has to do with the eternal gospel. In Revelation 14:3, 4, just before our text begins we can see what this gospel means for those who have been redeemed “from the earth” and “from among men.” These are the ones who sing the “new song,” knowing the quality of life with the Lamb. Their faithfulness is one side of the gospel. The flip side is the judgment of the unfaithful. This is something of a repeat of the opening of the fifth seal in Revelation 6:9-11. There we see the protected position of the slain servants under the altar, calling out for the judgment of the wicked. (See also Matthew 12:41, 42 and 2 Thessalonians 1:4-10)

The gospel message of the glorified Christ is a two-edge sword (Revelation 1:16; 2:12), even for Christians; the gospel corresponds with the messages of “the little scroll” that John was both sweet and sour (10:9-11). Throughout the book of Revelation we have occasion to see both sides of the gospel in the lives of the faithful: it means both protection and suffering for God’s people. The suffering is brought by sin, which comes from various directions.

But the gospel requires also that this suffering not go unavenged. This message before us shows the just recompense in the eternal gospel. This is a message to all who live on earth.

He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

Those hearing the message must worship God. They must fear God and give him glory. He is Almighty god, the powerful Creator (Exodus 20:11; Psalm 146:6). Christians gladly worship him.

God’s enemies, however, prefer to worship “the beast” of Revelation 13. They stubbornly resist the truth, even though they must be aware of the certainty of the judgment of God for their evil deeds.

Growing allure of Christian fiction



By Cheris F. Hodges
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It’s fiction of a higher power and it is on the rise. Christian fiction has become one of the best selling type of black fiction on the market. The genre is defined as a celebration of God’s presence in life and does not contain profanity or explicit sexual activity. It is often a genre of gentle reads, according to the University of Tennessee.

Warner Books has devoted an imprint to the novels, as well as BET Books.

Vanessa Davis Griggs, author of the BET/New Spirit novel “Promises Beyond Jordan,” said Christian fiction is who African Americans are.

“For so long we had people telling us who we are. They said you had to have this in your book or you couldn’t have this in your book,” she said.

Griggs will appear at the Freedom Regional Library, located at 1230 Alleghany St., today at noon.



Griggs

Griggs, who is from Alabama, said when she first started trying to get published, she tried not to write Christian fiction. But it came through in the work anyway.

“I’ve always been a Christian,” she said. “It is a part of me.”

And it’s a part of her novel, which she self-published before it landed at BET Books.

Griggs’ novel centers around pastor George Landris, who is preparing for his wedding to Theresa Jordan when he gets news that will reverberate through many lives. His friend Johnnie Mae Taylor has been in a car wreck, and her husband and child are fighting for survival.

Theresa has her own dilemmas to contend with. Seeing her fiancé rushing to another woman’s side increases Theresa’s doubts about George’s commitment to her. She knows George has always loved Johnnie Mae, even if their relationship is platonic, but his devotion and concern puts a serious strain on their upcoming nuptials.

An unforeseen tragedy and a shocking revelation reopen painful scars – and create fresh wounds that could change four lives. As accusa-

Please see **CHRISTIAN/7B**



Houghton OK on ‘Level’

Israel & New Breed
Live From Another Level
Israel Houghton & Alex
W. Lindsey, producers
Integrity Gospel



Israel Houghton and New Breed are the hottest thing going in praise & worship. The group’s debut CD “New Season” had gospel buyers buzzing music stores trying to find the nearly obscure release.

“Live From Another Level,” the group’s second release, is nearly a carbon copy of the first. It features lots of dance-oriented songs and weepy ballads that sort of wander around.

Houghton spreads 21 songs over two CDs, splitting the genres by CD. Neither is compelling or memorable. CD one contains the radio hit “Again I Say Rejoice,” which packs a wallop of a beat but not much else. The rest of the disc sounds like stuff from any current urban radio station’s playlist.

The second disc is a bit better. New Breed’s tight harmonies are heavenly and enhance the songs’ melodies. The “Awesome Medley” is the standout. New Breed combines “I Stand In Awe” and “Awesome Is This Place,” both better known in Contemporary Christian circles. Neither song has sounded better. The group does an equally good job with “Here I Am To Worship.” Houghton closes the set with a disco-funk song called “Going To Another Level.” If this CD actually did that, the song would have been perfect to close. Instead, it merely points out how mundane these songs are. Not my cup of tea.

Ratings

- Classic; ☆☆☆☆
- Excellent ☆☆☆
- Good ☆☆☆
- Fair ☆☆☆
- Why? ☆
- No stars – A mess

Church-sponsored car wash gives hope to convicts, dropouts

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GARY, Ind. – Antione Sparks is 25 years old, and already, he says, “I’ve seen 25 of my friends killed.”

“I just pretend that they are out of town and haven’t come back yet,” he said.

All were homicides.

He concedes few were innocent victims, and not that long ago realized

he was following the same path that led to their destruction.

At 21, Sparks hadn’t graduated from high school and had no desire to seek employment.

He said he preferred the taste of alcohol and the euphoric high that comes from the use of marijuana.

He said the most important change in his life came when an uncle urged him to apply at a car

wash that needed help – Diplomat Car Care Center across the street from Embassies of Christ Church on Ridge Road in Gary.

“I was at home watching cartoons all day, so I figured it was worth a try.”

Today, Sparks is assistant manager at Diplomat, an outreach program of the church that reaches out to ex-convicts and hardcore unemployed to

prove there is no such thing as someone who can’t be a benefit to society.

Sparks credits the program with his turnaround in life, his discipline as an employee and his bright outlook on the future. His goal is to become an entrepreneur, owning his own business.

His co-worker Eric Thomas also got off to a bad start.

Please see **CHURCH/5B**

CHURCH NEWS

White Dove Chapel provides a free lunch to anyone in need every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at their 993 Summers Road location between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Doors open at 9 a.m. for coffee and fellowship.

May 20
Tommy Ford, co-star of the long-running sitcom “Martin,” will be the special guest for the youth at University Park Baptist Church, as part of the Holy Hype Night presented by the

Young Kingdom Citizens. From 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

May 21
Faith Community Church will celebrate its 32nd anniversary Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and 7 p.m., at 701 Howie Mine Road in Waxhaw.

May 22
District III ushers will hold their quarterly meeting on Sat. May 22 at 10 a.m. in the Macedonia Baptist Church at 1300 Hateras Ave., all youth ushers and youth

supervisors are asked to attend.

• St. Matthew Catholic Church will be hosting the Christian Coffee house at their parish center, located at 8015 Ballantyne Commons Parkway. The coffeehouse opens at 7:30 p.m.

May 23
The Temple of Total Deliverance Ministries at 5521 Cannon Drive in Monroe is hosting a pre pastor’s anniversary celebration at 6

p.m. The guest minister will be Carl Turner of Faith Soldiers Word Ministries.

May 24
Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, located at 517 Baldwin Ave., will host a city wide revival through May 27. The revival starts at 7 p.m. each night.

May 29
The Mecklenburg General Baptist Association Usher Ministry will host a workshop from 8:45 a.m. until 1 p.m. at Chappell Memorial

Baptist Church, 110 Bradford Dr.

May 30
Don Lewis will headline Friendship Baptist Church’s Fifth Sunday Hymn Sing. The event begins at 5 p.m. at the church located at 3301 Beatties Ford Road.

June 4
The Temple of Total Deliverance Ministries at 5521 Cannon Drive in Monroe will hold First Lady’s Night, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The Please see **NAZARETH’S/7B**