

AND GOD SAID

Dr. John Allan Lavender
A Bible Reading

For this dramatic reading you will need three matching lecterns. Perhaps one of your laymen will make them for you. Or, you can use three matching, adjustable music stands. Place the one from which you, as pastor, will read in the center. Depending on the amount of space available, place the other two six or more feet to the right and left of center. Adjust heights to accommodate a woman reader and two male readers. Select these readers carefully for dramatic reading ability and presentability. Make sure there is adequate light for reading. As the Bible reading begins, you and the first male reader are standing at your lecterns. The woman and second male reader remain seated.

Pastor:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear." And it was so.

And God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit, each according to its kind." And it was so.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly about the earth." And, "Let the earth bring forth cattle and creeping things and beasts according to their kinds." And it was so.

First Male Reader:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the

cattle, and over all the earth.@

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him. And God blessed them, and said unto them, ABe fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

(Organ Music) Last two measures, A**Come Unto Him@**from The Messiah.

Woman and second male reader stand behind their lectern.

Pastor:

Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman,

First Male Reader:

A**Did God say, >You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?=@**

Pastor:

And the woman said to the serpent,

Woman Reader:

AWe may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but God said, >You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.=@

Pastor:

But the serpent said to the woman,

First Male Reader:

AYou will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.@

Pastor:

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for good, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its

fruit and ate. And she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of the both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord called to the man, and said to him,
AWhere are you?@

First Male Reader:

AI heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.@

Pastor:

AWho told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?@

First Male Reader:

AThe woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.@

Pastor:

Then the Lord God said to the woman, AWhat is this that you have done?@

Woman Reader:

AThe serpent beguiled me, and I ate.@

Pastor:

The Lord God said to the serpent, ABecause you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals. Upon your belly you shall go and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.@

Woman Reader:

To the woman he said, AI will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.@

Second Male reader:

And to Adam he said, ACursed is the ground because of you; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. You are dust, and to dust you shall return.@"

Pastor:

Then the Lord God said, ABehold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever (I shall send) him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.@"

(So God) drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the tree of life.

(Organ Interlude) **Last three measure of the Messiah overture and first three measures of**

AComfort Ye.@" (Woman and second male reader are seated.)

First Male Reader

AComfort ye, comfort ye, my people,@" says your God. ASpeak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.@"

A voice cries: AIn the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low. The uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.@"

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name: Immanuel. God with us.

Pastor:

Oh thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain. O

thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with strength. Lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God! For the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given. And the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called: AWonderful Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace.@

(Organ Interlude) **The Pastorale symphony from the Messiah**, eight measures from letter Ab.@"

Woman Reader stands up

Pastor:

In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the House of David. And the virgin-s name was Mary. The angel Gabriel came to her and said,

First Male Reader:

ADo not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from sin.@"

Woman Reader:

AMy soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. Behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.@"

Pastor:

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them,

Second male reader:

AFear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you. Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.®

Pastor:

And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

All in unison:

: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

(Organ Interlude) AGloria In Excelsis® page187, the Christian Worship Hymnal

Second Male Reader:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David . . .
As he spoke by his holy prophets from of old . . .

Pastor:

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,

Second Male Reader:

And the ears of the deaf unstopped,

Pastor:

Then shall the lame man leap like a hart,

Second Male Reader:

And the tongue of the dumb sing for joy.

Pastor:

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,

Second Male Reader:

And streams in the desert,

Pastor:

And he will feed his flock like a shepherd,

Second Male Reader:

He will the gather the lambs in his arms,

Pastor:

He will carry them in his bosom,

Second Male Reader:

And gently lead those that are with young.

(Organ Interlude) **AHe Was Despised@from the Messiah**, first eight measures, omit interlude.

Pastor:

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

First Male Reader:

He was despised and rejected of men. A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. And we hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him, stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Pastor:

He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. And with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

First Male Reader:

And they took Jesus, and led him away. And when they came to the place which is called the skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. And Jesus said, AFather, forgive them; for they know not what they do.®

Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, AFather, into thy hands I commit my spirit!® And having said this, he breathed his last.

(Organ Interlude) **ACHrist We Do Adore Thee,®from The Seven Last Words** by Du Bois.

Four measures. *Readers remain standing with heads bowed.*

Woman Reader:

But he could not be holden by death, and on the first day of the week, at early dawn, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground. The men said to them,

First Male Reader and Pastor:

AWhy do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.®

Woman Reader:

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

First Male Reader:

For now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead and as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

Pastor:

Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever: Kings of kings, and Lord of lords, Hallelujah!

Woman Reader:

Worthy is the lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing.

Pastor:

Blessing and honor, glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb, forever and ever.

All in unison:

Amen!

(Organ interlude) **Dresden Amen.**

Second Male Reader:

The Spirit and the bride say, ACome.@ And let him who hears say, ACome.@

Pastor:

And let him who is thirsty come. Let him who desires, take the water of life freely.