

Singing with All Your Heart



by Dawn Reed
Eastern Ky. Columnist

My daughter loves Christmas music. Kenny and Dolly's *Once Upon a Christmas* (1984) is her go-to for Christmas cheer. Three weeks before Thanksgiving, at work

with her office door closed, she could hold it in no longer and was belting out one song after another like she was getting paid for it.

"A Christmas to Remember" came on her most favorite of all and she let it rip, singing both Kenny AND Dolly's parts. Between notes she heard a knock at the door. A co-worker stuck her head in. "We can hear you," she whispered.

Oh, mercy! That's still good stuff! I know how loud she can sing! She felt free to share her Christmas joy but didn't realize others were listening.

Paul and Silas knew a little about people overhearing their singing.

In Acts 16, Paul and Silas had stirred up no small amount

of trouble in Philippi when a fortune-telling slave girl was released from an evil spirit in the Name of Jesus. The girl's owners were filled with rage. They falsely accused Paul and Silas of throwing the city into an uproar, while they themselves incited a riot! Seized, stripped, and severely beaten, the good guys were secured firmly in stocks, in the inner prison, in the dark. (The Bible doesn't mention the dark, but that's how I picture it.) It was surely a dark time!

These men of God had done no wrong, yet they had been publicly humiliated, lied about and beaten within an inch of their lives, then placed in chains! Shew! Let the sad music and tears flow! Paul and Silas could have screamed, shouted, said bad words, spouted, and anything else they wanted and who could blame

them?! Not a chance.

About midnight . . . the darkest time of the night . . . Paul and Silas were praying and SINGING hymns to God! Acts 16:25 reports that "the other prisoners were listening to them".

Suddenly there was a violent earthquake that shook the foundations of the prison. The prison doors flew open and everybody's chains came loose! The jailer and his family were saved that day! Woohoo and ptL! I'm not sure what songs Paul and Silas sang that night, but I know they rocked the house!

Have you read of the unexpected concert recorded in 2 Chronicles 20? The people of Judah went out to fight three armies, not with cannons or grenades, but with song! Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and praise

Him for the splendor of His holiness (I LOVE THAT LINE!) as they went out. As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir so that they clobbered each other! Holy Moly!

Though 2020 has been a pill, there are still things to sing about! Over two thousand years ago, God sent His only Son to be born-our most precious gift. He came to be the Savior of the world!

I don't sound great but I'm getting tuned up with Psalm 13:6: "I will sing the LORD's praise, for He has been good to me." He HAS been good! Whether your favorites are classic carols or new stuff . . . sing! Sing with all your heart-no matter who's listening!

"The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear," (Buddy

Seeds of Hope



"You have stage three transitional cell carcinoma of the bladder," said the urologist in a calm, yet hardly reassuring voice. Anytime, anyone is diagnosed with cancer is a day to remember. "Why me and why now God?" is the standard response for most individuals who hear these words. The initial impact of those words is difficult to accept and usually faith-threatening. How could a loving Father do such a mean, ugly thing to one of His children? When life caves in, what are we to do?

David was experiencing a difficult time in his life. And although he was uncertain about his future he was confident in the One who controlled it. In a burst of trust he said, "My

times are in Your hands!"

There is something comforting in those words. A reassurance that God has a plan and purpose for each of us. We did not wander into this world by accident. God did not intend for us to drift through life like clouds in the sky. He brought each of us into this world with something to do, some place to go and some plan to fulfill. All throughout our lives we are in the hands of God.

We are often tempted to think, "If I were in control I would have done things differently." No pain, no suffering, no temptations, no mistakes. But, thank God, we are not in control. We do not know the future nor do we know what is best for us. But we do know that whatever God is doing in our lives is in our best interest. He wants us to be conformed to His image and He is the only One who knows how to do that.

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BIBLE WORD SEARCH

by Elie's Spiritual Treasures

Luke 1:46-48

And Mary said, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant."

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Find the bolded/underlined words in the diagram. They run in all directions — forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

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Bible Word Search Answer on Page 12

Stickeler's Puzzle



Today we have an alphabetic reminding us that it's almost prom season.

IT'S Let E = 5
TIME O = 8
+ TO T = 9
DANCE No word can begin with zero

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Stickeler's Answer on Page 12

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BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Herod in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. Which "Caesar" ordered all the world to be taxed, causing Mary to travel to Bethlehem while expecting the baby Jesus? Julius, Tiberius, Claudius, Augustus
3. Where in the Bible (KJV) does it inform of the Christ Child being born in a December? Does not, John 1:14, Romans 6:23, Galatians

4:4

4. With seemingly two different New Testament answers, who was the father of Joseph? Jacob/Heli, Gideon/Ishmael, Solomon/Nahum, Samuel/Pilate

5. Where did the angel Gabriel appear to Mary saying, "Blessed art thou among women"? Nazareth, Tyre, Ninevah, Gazi

6. For the journey to Bethlehem, how did Mary and Joseph travel? Bible not specific, Cart, Rode donkey, Small raft

Answers on bottom of Page 12

"Test Your Bible knowledge," with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in bookstores and online.



"I hate the idea of _____ my wife would never let me take this many coffee breaks."

SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Entice
PARENT

Fable
GLEEND

Entering
DARWIN

Impede
HERDIN

TODAY'S WORD

View From Above

by BOB CASEY, preacher
Cornerstone Church of Christ
70 Bond Street at Camp Avenue in West Irvine

In Acts, chapters 6 and 7, is found one of the most popular stories in the New Testament. Here is portrayed the "Great Saint of God," named Stephen being chosen as one of the first deacons of the church; filled with faith and the Holy Ghost.

Some time later, we find Stephen disputing with the religious factions of that day, called the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and some of Cilicia and Asians. "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. ¹¹Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. ¹²And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, ¹³And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: ¹⁴For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. ¹⁵And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Acts 6:10-15

Then, in chapter 7, he proceeded to preach the most complete historical stories in the New Testament. He began with God calling Abram out of Charran into Canaan. He spoke of his offspring and their journey down into Egypt to live under the care of Joseph; then being led out by God's man Moses. He never left anything out of the history of the past up to that present day. Then, he taught them about Jesus sent from God to save them, but instead, they resisted him and nailed him to the cross. So, in the course of his message, those listening were cut to the heart and gnashed on him with their teeth, because they were so angered by the truth he spoke.

Then Stephen gave this great testimony, saying, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Acts 6:56 This so infuriated this unbelieving crowd that they screamed and ran upon him with one accord. Then, they stoned him until he was dead. Even while dying, he prayed for their sins to be forgiven.

At this point, I will mention again that Almighty God and His Son Jesus looked down and saw their deeds. God has always seen the deeds of man, both good and bad. Even in Noah's day, "GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5 Because of this, God decided that it was time to bring it all to an end; and so he did, with a great flood destroying all the evil men but preserving Noah and his family.

Then, there were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, recorded in Genesis, chapters 15-19. God heard the sinful cry of evil activity and said, because this is very grievous, I will go down and see it for myself, taking two angels with him. And, so it was after the visit of the angels, God decided to destroy these evil men and their cities, and he did it with fiery brimstone rained from the sky. So God saw and rendered judgment. Space will not permit to tell of others, but one more that was destroyed because of sinful evil over the annihilation of the Nation of Israel by the Roman armies in 71 A.D. This was told by Jesus before the crucifixion recorded in Matthew 23:33-39. He said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate;" Matthew 23:38 and so it was.

In closing, I wonder what God and our Saviour is seeing at this present time. How long will it be before he intercedes in the affairs of this sinful world. Only God knows. Hebrews 10:37 says, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Are you ready for his coming?

Call anytime, Waco, 1-859-369-4165.

Sincerely, Bob Casey