

The Connection of True Worship and Handel's Messiah

- Let me close with a story. It's the story of a man who got such a clear vision of the glory of God, it inspired an unusual expression of true worship.
- His father was a physician who had hoped his son would follow in his steps in medicine or law.
- But the son's gift was music. He was not only a gifted musician, but a conductor and composer. He composed his first musical piece at age 12. ¹

- However, for many years his music was a struggle. His personality didn't make it any easier.
- He had a hair-trigger temper leading to frequent fights with other musicians.
- At age 52 his health began to break. History indicates he seems to have suffered from a stroke which incapacitated him, making it impossible for him to perform or conduct, because of his paralyzed his right arm.
- He had money troubles too. He lost a fortune in the opera business and finally gave it up.
- By age 57. He was hopelessly in debt and was suffering from severe depression.

- One day a young poet named Charles Jennens appeared unannounced at his door. He delivered to him a collection of biblical passages under the title of A Sacred Oratorio.²
- Composed entirely of Scripture portions, the 73 verses told the story of Christ: His birth, death, resurrection, and his victory over sin from the book of Revelation.
- The composer was deeply affected when he read it. He was so inspired, he decided he must compose an oratorio based on this libretto. ³
- Some say he wrote it in 24 days barely pausing for rest, and often going without food.
- It has been said at times he would leap to his feet and scream "hallelujah!"
- When he finished the chorus his assistant reported finding him in tears saying, "I think I saw heaven open, and saw the very face of God". ⁴

- The composition wasn't commissioned for a great audience though. It first debuted at a charity event and it took a long time for it to be popularly received by the public. However, over time it gained momentum.
- So much so that it was eventually played for England's royal family. In fact, 100 years after it was written it was performed for Queen Victoria who by then was wheel-chair bound. She was so moved by the composition she struggled to her feet saying: "“No way will I sit in the presence of the King of kings.”"⁵

- This composer who was all but washed up, was inspired to write his greatest composition because the words of scripture pointed Him to the true King of kings and Lord of lords.

¹ <http://www.djameskennedy.org/index.php/2011/12/the-birth-of-a-classic-handels-messiah/>

² ² Real Worship! A Study of Revelation 4-5 (Part I) - Sam Storms
<http://www.samstorms.com/all-articles/post/real-worship-a-study-of-revelation-4-5--part-i->

³ <http://www.beliefnet.com/columnists/bibleandculture/2009/12/handels-messiah-the-story-behind-the-classic.html>

⁴ ibid

⁵ <http://www.jerrynewcombe.com/birth-classic-handels-messiah/>

- You know his work. You hear the chorus every Christmas. George Frederic Handel simply entitled it “Messiah.”
- That wonderful, worshipful composition came about because a bitter, sick, angry man got a clear view of the glory of God.
- Imagine how your life and mine might be changed if we do the same!