

BECAUSE HE LIVES

A Musical for **EASTER**

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

by Nan Allen

“ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA”

with “He Lives”

Read Romans 6:4-11. Paul was writing to the early Roman church, explaining the privilege that Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection gave to the believer. Contemplate the contrasts mentioned (that is, death and life), and list these comparisons.

In Revelation 19, the word Alleluia is associated with the second coming of Christ. As you read these verses, notice the exuberance that permeates this Scripture. Even though the word Alleluia (or Hallelujah) doesn’t appear often in Scripture, the idea does.

The word alleluia derived from an Old Testament Hebrew word “hallel,” which means “a song of praise.” The whole “hallel” can be found in Psalms 113-118. Read Psalm 113 and notice the similarities found here and in Revelation 19.

A song of praise to God has been sung since the beginning of time and will continue until the end of time. As you sing the hymns “Alleluia, Alleluia” and “He Lives,” praise God for His sacrifice and for the power of His resurrection that gives you power now and forever!

“BECAUSE HE LIVES (AMEN)”

Nowadays, the word amen almost always ends a prayer; it can be spoken or, in some churches, sung. Because of this, many churchgoers believe it means “the end,” but it means so much more. It is from a Hebrew word meaning a proclamation that is certain, sure and credible, truthful and faithful. It is often translated as “so be it.”¹

This song begins with creed-like statements, somewhat like an oath. Then the chorus states: “Amen, amen. I’m alive, I’m alive because He lives. Amen, amen. Let my song join the one that never ends, because He lives.”²

Because of the resurrection, we have assurance that God has our tomorrows and our forever in His hands.

Read Romans 8:15 and Philippians 3:7-11.

The power of the resurrection, as the song says, drives out fear and breaks the chains of sin. Praise God for allowing us to know that power.

¹Nan Corbitt Allen, *The Words We Sing: Bringing Meaning to Worship* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2010), 25.

²Words taken from “Because He Lives (Amen)” by Daniel Carson, Ed Cash, Gloria Gaither, William J. Gaither, Jason Ingram, Matt Maher, and Chris Tomlin.

“WORTHY IS THE LAMB”

In the ancient Hebrew world, meat was not served often. In fact, the serving of meat at a meal was mostly reserved for special occasions. So, a taste of lamb was a rare treat. Lamb was the delicacy—the lobster or caviar—of the day, especially if it was a perfect lamb.

This fact made lamb special and, therefore, expensive...and the perfect sacrifice—something rare, costly, and pure.³

Read Revelation 5:12.

Blood is essential to life, which medical science has confirmed. There is no substitute for blood. Nothing man-made can be used in its stead. That’s the purpose of blood drives and donor programs: to pass the life-giving properties of blood from one life to another.

The blood was to be taken from an animal, a lamb that had been slaughtered. This was significant because lambs—any kind of meat—was scarce, and the killing of a food-producing animal meant real sacrifice. But that’s what God required of His people, then and now—obedience, sacrifice, and trust without full understanding.⁴

Today, animal sacrifice is no longer practiced in most places in the world, but the idea of a lamb slain to cover our sins forevermore is still as sobering a thought as ever. In fact, read Hebrews 10:10 and thank God for the gift of His Son.

“BLESSED ASSURANCE (MY KING IS COMING)”

To be “at rest” is something we don’t experience much in our busy world. But even in the middle of activity and noise around us, we can still understand the “peace that surpasses every thought,” as Paul says in Philippians 4:7. Read the fourth chapter of Philippians and ask God to give you the “blessed assurance” that Fanny Crosby was writing about in her lyric.

Now look at the whole song lyric in your hymnal. Verse 2 (which isn’t in this arrangement) begins: “Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight.”⁵

This lyric is more powerful if you know that Fanny was blind from infancy.

The Book of Hebrews gives words of assurance to those who are in Christ. Read Hebrews 10:19-23. What can our assurance prompt us to do? Pray for assurance, peace, and boldness in your walk with the Lord.

³Allen, *Words We Sing*, 138.

⁴Allen, *Words We Sing*, 49.

⁵Words taken from “Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine,” by Fanny J. Crosby.

“OH, THE WONDER”

This wonderful song begins by listing the wonders that are ours in Him. Name them.

Read the second chapter of Ephesians. Can you see how the song reflects this passage (one of my favorites)?

The second verse lists more wonders of Christ’s sacrifice. Name these.

Now claim each thing on the list, remembering that the peace, joy, comfort, healing, and freedom are already yours as an heir to God’s riches.

“BECAUSE HE LIVES”

I can hardly sing this song without welling up with tears. Because of the resurrection of Jesus, I have hope for the future!

Jeremiah was speaking for God when he addressed the Jews held in captivity in Babylon. Read Jeremiah 29:11-13. Verse 11 is the most memorable and the most often quoted, but look at verses 12 and 13. Not only can we have hope, but we have a God who listens and wants us to search constantly for His touch.

John recorded Jesus’ after-dinner speech (otherwise known as the last supper), quoting the Savior as He addresses the disciples one last time before He faces the cross. Read John 14, paying close attention to verse 19. What does Jesus promise there?

Paul restates this idea of having life because of Christ’s resurrection in Philippians 1:21-25. Read this passage and pray that the Word of Life and the lyrics to the song will stay in your heart in times of trial, fear, and discouragement.