

Advent and *Messiah*

We have entered Advent, the period of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus – the period immediately before Christmas. It is a high, holy time of praise and worship.

Choirs everywhere – both secular and religious – will be performing *Messiah*, an oratorio by George Frideric Handel. Composed in the summer of 1741 and premiered in Dublin on April 13, 1742, *Messiah* is Handel's most famous creation and is among the most popular works in Western choral literature. The very well-known *Hallelujah* chorus is part of Handel's *Messiah*.



***St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, Ireland,
where Handel's Messiah premiered in 1742.***

One might conclude that Handel must have been in a state of remarkable personal exhilaration to have penned such a glorious work. But it has been said that when Handel's health and finances were at a low point, he rose to the greatest heights of his creative experience. His creditors were threatening him with imprisonment, and he was suffering from partial paralysis. He then went into seclusion and prayed to God as never before.

It was during this time that God enabled him to write the grandest of all his oratorios, *Messiah*. The notes seemed to fly from his pen.

It may appear that difficulties would prevent us from being productive in the Lord's service, but actually the opposite can be true. Through God's intervention, our losses can be turned into great gain, and the outcome of our trials will become a blessing to others.

In all things, even our afflictions, God is working everything together for our benefit. Overruling the bad to produce good is no problem to an all-powerful, loving God.

All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

--Beecher Hunter