Lenten Readings

40 Selections from *The Gospel According to George; Exploring Handel’s* Messiah

George Fredric Handel’s oratorio *Messiah* tells the whole story of Messiah’s life, passion, death and glorious revelation, including the longing for him before his birth and the spread of the good news after his return to heaven. Such a broad sweep of history makes great listening—and reading—during Lent. Let *The Gospel According to George* by LeAnne Smith Hardy with Sylvia Patterson-Scott carry you through this season of preparation for Easter as you listen to Handel’s marvelous music and meditate on the text. By omitting the familiar Christmas scene with the shepherds and a few movements from Part 3 as well as combining recitatives with the arias they are meant to introduce, this plan reduces the fifty-three movements of *Messiah* to fit the forty days of Lent. You will find questions and suggestions for meditation for individuals and families in the Beyond the Music sections of the book with each movement.

Day 1, Handel’s *Messiah* #1, Sinfonia (orchestra)

Day 2, Handel’s *Messiah* #2 Recitative (Tenor) Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Day 3, Handel’s *Messiah* #3, Air (tenor) Ev'ry valley shall be exalted

Day 4, Handel’s *Messiah* #4, Chorus. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,

Day 5, Handel’s *Messiah* #5, recitative (bass) Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts:

and #6 air (alto or soprano) But who may abide the day of His coming,

Day 6, Handel’s *Messiah* #7, Chorus. And He shall purify the sons of Levi,

Day 7, Handel’s *Messiah* #8, Recitative (alto) Behold, a virgin shall conceive

Day 8, Handel’s *Messiah* #9, Air (alto) and Chorus. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion…

Day 9, Handel’s *Messiah* #10, Recitative (bass) For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,

Day 10, Handel’s *Messiah* #11, Air (bass) The people that walked in darkness

Day 11, Handel’s *Messiah* #17, Chorus. "Glory to God in the highest,”

Day 12, Handel’s *Messiah* #18, Air (soprano) Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion;

Day 13, Handel’s *Messiah* #19, Recitative (alto) Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened,

Day 14, Handel’s *Messiah* #20, Air (soprano and/or alto) He shall feed His flock/Come unto Him

Day 15, Handel’s *Messiah* #21, Chorus. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

Day 16, Handel’s *Messiah* #22, Chorus. Behold the Lamb of God,

Day 17, Handel’s *Messiah* #23, Air (alto) He was despised

Day 18, Handel’s *Messiah* #24, Chorus. Surely He hath borne our griefs,

Day 19, Handel’s *Messiah* #25, Chorus. And with His stripes we are healed.

Day 20, Handel’s *Messiah* #26, Chorus. All we like sheep have gone astray;

Day 21, Handel’s *Messiah* #27, Recitative (tenor), All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn;

and #28, Chorus. "He trusted in God”

Day 22, Handel’s *Messiah* #29, Recitative (tenor) Thy rebuke hath broken His heart:

Day 23, Handel’s *Messiah* #30, Arioso (tenor) Behold, and see

Day 24, Handel’s *Messiah* #31, Recitative (Soprano or tenor) He was cut off

and #32 Air (Soprano or tenor) But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell;

Day 25, Handel’s *Messiah* #33, Chorus. Lift up your heads, O ye gates;

Day 26, Handel’s *Messiah* #34, Recitative (tenor) Unto which of the angels said He

and #35, Chorus. Let all the angels of God worship Him.

Day 27, Handel’s *Messiah* #36, Air (alto or soprano) Thou art gone up on high;

Day 28, Handel’s *Messiah* #37, Chorus. The Lord gave the word;

Day 29, Handel’s *Messiah* #38, Air (soprano or alto) and Chorus. How beautiful are the feet

Day 30, Handel’s *Messiah* #39, Chorus (or air for tenor) Their sound is gone out

Day 31, Handel’s *Messiah* #40, Air (bass) Why do the nations so furiously rage together,

Day 32, Handel’s *Messiah* #41, Chorus. Let us break their bonds asunder,

Day 33, Handel’s *Messiah* #42, Recitative. He that dwelleth in Heav'n shall laugh

and #43, Air (tenor) Thou shalt break them

Day 34, Handel’s *Messiah* #44, Chorus. Hallelujah:

Day 35, Handel’s *Messiah* #45, Air (soprano) I know that my Redeemer liveth,

Day 36, Handel’s *Messiah* #46, Chorus. Since by man came death,

Day 37, Handel’s *Messiah* #50, Duet (alto and tenor) O death, where is thy sting?

Day 38, Handel’s *Messiah* #51, Chorus. But thanks be to God,

Day 39, Handel’s *Messiah* #52, Air (soprano, alto) If God be for us, who can be against us?

Day 40, Handel’s *Messiah* #53, Chorus. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,