

“The Spirit in The Sky!”

John 4:23–24

Drake Hunter – February 17, 2019

Lord, thank you for giving us the ability to express ourselves in a way that brings honor to you. Forgive us for our poor attitudes, a poor spirit, when it comes to living LIFE the Way you designed it to be. We ask for your Spirit to reckon with ours so we can reflect your Goodness standing on your Greatness. We now give attention towards your Spirit and truth, in Jesus name, Amen!

We are well into our yearlong series “L.I.F.E. ROCK ON!” and our aim for the year is to empower you with understanding of what it means to be a whole and complete person living through the Christian faith. Of course, we do this by “Fearing God and obeying His commands” for we know this, it is the “duty of all mankind” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Now, as most know, each week we are connecting a “Classic Rock” song to some powerful Biblical truths, truths like; understanding that vision is the key to directing your life – “Dream On”. Another truth we uncovered, there are two types of power bases – positional and personal, and depending on which one you rely on, it will determine if you are a “Hot Blooded” Christian or not. One last truth to share, and to keep with good form, “Life is not to be lived in part but in whole.” The secular part and spiritual part of life must live together if we expect to live with a sense of integrity – “I’m A Believer!”

Just a few truths we’ve uncovered since we began our series, now onto this week’s truth through the classic rock song and our message today: “The Spirit in the Sky.” Read with me ...

John 4:23–24

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

Our classic rock song this morning is “Spirit in the Sky” written and originally recorded by Norman Greenbaum. The song was released in late 1969 and was a big hit for several years and continues to be a favorite song of many in our day and age.

The song has a very interesting story behind it. The interesting part, Norman Greenbaum is Jewish, and he refers quite often to Jesus throughout the song. Jesus being a friend who recommends you to the “Spirit in the Sky” when you die and are laid to rest, and this, according to Mr. Greenbaum, “is the place that is best.”; a Christian belief rather than a Jewish one. Very unorthodox for a person who claims the Jewish faith as the Way.

In a 2006 interview with the New York Times, Mr. Greenbaum told a reporter he was inspired to write the song after watching a fellow singer (Christian Artist) who sang a gospel song on a TV show. When Greenbaum experience the gospel singer, he thought to himself: “Yeah, I could do that”, and without knowing anything about gospel music he wrote the song, “Spirit in the Sky”.

Now, it’s been shared Greenbaum attempted to write a religious rock song with a Jewish flair to it by using a Hebrew or Jewish name for God, Yahweh, but it didn’t have the same ring to it or marketability as the name “Jesus” did. A good economic reason, I guess. Makes sense though, because when speaking to many of my Jewish friends they would testify the “The reason the Christian faith was invented was they, the Jews, needed somebody to pay retail.” ...I think my wife might be half Jewish. I don’t think Sherrie has ever paid full retail for anything. By the way, my next book is title, in honor of my wife, “Following the Coupon!”, never pay retail again.

Now, setting the song facts aside, and listening to the song, without a shadow of doubt, there is a very clear Christian message being expressed. The message: “If you are a friend of Jesus and choose to follow him and personally allow his Spirit, that is, both the “Spirit in the Sky”(General Revelation) and His spirit within you (Specific Revelation), to guide you here on earth, you’ll be set up to be in a place that is the best, a place of rest, now, where you and your friends agree through Jesus, to do the Will of the Father, together, where Jesus resides – The Spirit in the Sky.

Matthew 18:19–20

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

Jesus is the Spirit in the Sky and the spirit within you that’s makes up the moral aspect of who you are, and when you and other friends, who have the Spirit, within connect with the “Spirit in the Sky” then a wonderful life, a happy life, can be enjoyed together, now and for all eternity. There’s the meaning of the song.

You see, where two or more gather in the death of their own **interest**, in their own **selfishness**, and in their own **pride**, that is the place that is the best. The best being the true beliefs of Jesus, his commands, and the promise He made to all his disciples everywhere and through all time to be present everywhere, once again expressing he is the “The Spirit in the Sky”.

Imagine, two people gathered who decide to die to their selfish ways. What would that marriage look like? Imagine a family sacrificing their own preference to come together to form one cohesive unit. What would the family look like? What about a church, where two or more gather in the name of Jesus, **where personal traditions, individual history and exclusive experiences** could be understood, respected and loved where all could come together in agreement to create a movement for Christ in their day and age. What would that church look and feel like, in... let’s say... a community like, Morgan County? I think it would resemble the “Spirit in the Sky” that I’m implying here, where people realize their potential through God’s Direction and Power, rather than through man’s finite and broken ways.

Now, let me make something very clear here, when I say “Spirit in the Sky” I’m not referring to some vague or mystical force. What I’m saying and implying here is all about the third Person of the Triune God – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the subjective side of your relationship with God and who is personal and responsible to guide you to the Father’s Direction, aligned with the Son’s Principles , so your spirit can be united with God’s so we can execute a life of integrity with amazing and loving relationships, both with God and your neighbors.

Matthew 22:37–39

Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Yes, the Holy Spirit is intangible and difficult to visualize through expression but can be completely understood when thinking about it through Jesus. When we examine Jesus’ ministry here on earth and his ministry today, we find a universal and powerful presence and activity of the Spirit throughout the ministry of Jesus in our day and age. You see, through Jesus’ birth, the announcement of his ministry by John the Baptist, his death, resurrection, ascension and his continuing ministry today, God the Holy Spirit, the manifestation of Jesus’s ministry, is alive and well transforming those who choose LIFE through God’s glorious Ways.

2 Corinthians 3:18

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

When Norman Greenbaum wrote the song "Spirit in the Sky" I'm sure he was hoping for a big external paycheck and that it would come from the pockets of naïve, simple and innocent Christians, which, by the way, it did! But that's okay, because without realizing it, what God did through Greenbaum was deliver a strong intrinsic real paycheck that produced a meaningful and significant message that Jesus is the Way, Jesus is "The Spirit it The Sky".

God is Good and He can use anyone he wants to deliver his message no matter the intent of a person or faith they may claim. So, when Norman Greenbaum wrote the song, again, without realizing it, God was developing His plan that would carry on throughout our day and age. God's power continues, and his Spirit will continue no matter what. Why? Because God is not only the "Spirit in the Sky" on this earth but He is the "Spirit over all Heaven." The message: "Spirit in the Sky!" If you received the message say, "ROCK ON!"