

Alexander Massey

I Am Blessed

Job

(voice & piano or ...
high voice, low voice & piano)



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www.alexandermassey.com

I Am Blessed

How to encompass in one song the 42 chapters of the story of Job? There have been centuries of debate over the meaning of the Book of Job. Some remind us that the character of God in the story, is just that, a character, and not actually God. So the behaviour and words of God in the story do not reflect who/whatever the real God might be. Some say that God in this story is a bully, and that Job's phrase at the end - *al kein, emas v'nichamti* - means 'I repent, or recant', a sign of Job's capitulation when God pulls rank and shows his might. But *nichamti* does not mean recant or repent; it is a tricky word to translate. It is linked to consolation and compassion - so a better translation might be 'I am consoled'.

My personal interpretation is that Job undergoes a spiritual transformation; he says at the end that he has now truly 'seen' God. I take this as a description of insight, of personal revelation. God reveals Himself in His creation, at which point Job softens, and his heart and spirit open. This is why my setting of the verses I chose portrays a lyrical, loving voice for God; both the verse by God and the refrain from Job become more lyrical and yearning the second time around. It is a song of lovers reaching for one another. While Job's visitors ('comforters') only theorise about God, Job directly addresses God, and God responds. The relationship between God and Job deepens through the book until Job's final statement. In my lyric, I use the two halves of *emas v'nichamti* as the endings of v. 1 and v. 2: 'My words must rest', and 'I am blessed'. This last word is all the more telling, because in the early chapters Job says 'I am blessed' when he actually means that he feels cursed by God. So now Job's irony at the beginning of the book has become a genuine reconciliation to God at the end.

God: Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? Where were you?
Who, who set its cornerstone
When the morning stars sang before my throne?

Job: Lord, I'd only heard You at best,
But now I have seen You with my eyes,
My words must rest.

God: Can you tie the cords to the Pleiades? Or undo the reins of Orion?
Who, who gave understanding from the start?
Who put wisdom in your heart?

Job: Lord, I'd only heard You at best,
But now I have seen You with my eyes,
I am blessed!

Performance notes:

1. A solo performer needs to find a way in their interpretation to differentiate the voices of God and Job.
2. It might be interesting to experiment by giving the voices of God and Job to different singers. I would expect Job to be a tenor, and God could be a bass or an alto / mezzo.

I Am Blessed

Job

Music: Alexander Massey

Lyrics by: Alexander Massey

(based on Job 38:4, 7; 42:4-5, 38:31, 36)

With movement ♩ = 126

Piano

Character of God

Pno.

Pno.

I Am Blessed

21

_____ were you? Who, _____ who _____

Pno.

28

_____ set its cor - ner stone when the mor - ning stars sang _____

Pno.

35

_____ be - fore _____ my throne?

Pno.

42

Job

mf Lord, I'd on - ly heard _____ You at best, but _____

Pno.

I Am Blessed

49

now I have seen You with my eyes, my words _____

Pno.

49

subito p

56

_____ must rest!

Pno.

56

mp

63

Character of God

mp Can _____ you _____ tie the cords _____

Pno.

63

mp

70

_____ to the Plei - - - a - des? _____ Or un - do _____ the

Pno.

70

I Am Blessed

77

reins of O - ri - on? Who,

Pno.

84

who gave un - der - stand - ing from the start?

Pno.

91

Who put wis - dom in your heart?

Pno.

98

Job

mf Lord, I'd on - ly heard You at best, but

Pno.

I Am Blessed

105

now I have seen You with my eyes, I am blessed! _____

Pno.

112

112

Pno.

rit.

Red. *

118

118

Pno.

p

pp

Red. *