

I Know a Name—December's Hymn of the Month 2022

By
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The Bible says, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) Of course, this name is Jesus Christ. The evangelist and song publisher, Haldor Lillenas, certainly knew this to be true; but through a humbling experience, would write a song about this name, Jesus Christ.

Our story begins at the home of Mr. Lillenas in Indianapolis, Indiana. The year was 1928. He says this:

We had taken a delivery of a new grand piano at our home. I sat down to try the instrument and as I played, I began to find new chord combinations of which there seemed no end. With these chords, there came a new melody singing its way, a melody which took form and which clamored for words to express its meaning. It is customary to write the words of a song, then the music; but in this instance, the music was written first.

Apparently, the melody stayed wordless for several months. Finally, during a revival meeting in Denver, Colorado, the song was completed, but not without some uncomfortable moments, that humbling experience I mentioned before.

While preaching week long at the revival, Mr. Lillenas was in need of some cash. The local church was without a pastor so our writer was on his own to cash a check at the bank. The banker, not knowing Haldor Lillenas, refused to surrender the needed cash in trade for the personal check which made for a few tense moments—until finally a local businessman endorsed the check, also. This name the banker knew. The cash was no longer a problem. Haldor Lillenas tells us what happened next:

As I held out my hand and the cashier began to count out the money, a blessed truth came flooding over me. Every name has a meaning. Some are powerful because of the owner's reputation. Others are a liability because of the ill fame of those who have them. There is a name that far exceeds any earthly name. It weaves a magic spell over life's pathway. Its music is more thrilling than any symphony. Its melody brings into accord all the dissonance of earth. Its mention dispels the deepest shadows and puts sunshine in the soul. That name is Jesus!

Before the week was out, Haldor Lillenas would complete the song simply titled, *I Know a Name*.

I know a name that can drive away all sorrow,
I know a name that is sweeter than them all:
I know a name from which comfort I may borrow
When others fail and when tears of anguish fall.
I know a name, a wonderful name,
That wonderful name is Jesus.

