



"Cross Connection"

Radio Ministry of Hope Wesleyan Church and Wells of Salvation Ministries
Ultimate Oldies Radio – FM 97.7 and 101.1, Huber Heights, Ohio



Series: Christian Messages In Secular Music

4/1/09

Program 78 “(Don’t Fear) The Reaper” © Donald Roeser

This song by Blue Öyster Cult compels us to consider the phenomenon of death and our attitude concerning it. We have a natural fear of the unknown, but because the Bible reassures Christians of what awaits when we pass from this life, we can face our mortality with the assurance that we will be with our Lord Jesus forever! The Apostle Paul wrote, *“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’ ‘Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’...But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 15:54-55,57). Of all people on earth, followers of Jesus Christ need not “fear the reaper”!

The Song ¹

- By Blue Öyster Cult, from their '76 album, *Agents of Fortune*
- Written and sung by the band's lead guitarist, Donald "Buck Dharma" Roeser
- Built around a haunting guitar riff that opens the song and reappears throughout
- Blue Öyster Cult's biggest US hit, rising to #12 on the American charts
- Routinely played on classic rock radio stations today
- Voted "Best Rock Single" of '76 by *Rolling Stone*, which also ranked it #397 in their list of the "500 Greatest Songs of All Time"
- Named 55th best hard rock song of all time by VH1
- “Reaper” refers to the Grim Reaper, a traditional personification of death
- Many listeners believe the song concerns a murder-suicide pact

“... I was actually kind of appalled when I first realized that some people were seeing it as an advertisement for suicide or something that was not my intention at all. It is, like, not to be afraid of it (as opposed to actively bring it about). It's basically a love song where the love transcends the actual physical existence of the partners”

-- Buck Dharma ¹



The Group – Blue Öyster Cult ²

- American rock band formed in New York in '67; still active in '09
- Pioneer of heavy metal music -- for their hard-edged musical assault and use of sci-fi and occult imagery and subject matter
- Live performances include a trademark laser light show
- 14+ million albums sold worldwide
- Former names included Soft White Underbelly, Oaxaca, Stalk-Forrest Group, and the Santos Sisters, and ultimately Blue Öyster Cult in '71
- Lesser known hits include "Godzilla", and "Burnin' for You"

¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/\(Don%27t_Fear\)_The_Reaper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/(Don%27t_Fear)_The_Reaper)

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_%C3%96yster_Cult

All our times have come
Here but now they're gone

"But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hands..." – Psalm 31:14,15a

Seasons don't fear the reaper
Nor do the wind, the sun or the rain
...we can be like they are
Come on baby...don't fear the reaper
Baby take my hand...don't fear the reaper
We'll be able to fly...don't fear the reaper
Baby I'm your man...

At first, you might say that seasons, wind, sun and rain would have no fear because they are impersonal. Even so, they are part of God's creation. Consider this --

"The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration...in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time." – Rom. 8:19-22

Valentine is done
Here but now they're gone
Romeo and Juliet
Are together in eternity...Romeo and Juliet
40,000 men and women everyday
...Like Romeo and Juliet
40,000 men and women everyday
...Redefine happiness
Another 40,000 coming everyday
...We can be like they are
Come on baby...don't fear the reaper
Baby take my hand...don't fear the reaper
We'll be able to fly...don't fear the reaper
Baby I'm your man...

Romeo and Juliet were fictional characters who took their own lives, motivated by love for each other

- Do all people in love spend eternity together?
 - Why or why not?
- Some people think these lines glorify suicide
 - What do you think?
- Current estimates for the number of people who die each day range from 146,000 to 150,000^{3,4}
 - We can only wonder how many die without Jesus

Love of two is one
Here but now they're gone
Came the last night of sadness
And it was clear she couldn't go on
Then the door was open and the wind appeared
The candles blew then disappeared
The curtains flew then he appeared
...saying don't be afraid
Come on baby...and she had no fear
And she ran to him...then they started to fly
They looked backward and said goodbye
...she had become like they are
She had taken his hand
...she had become like they are
Come on baby...don't fear the reaper

Here we have the author's conception of death, but what really happens when a Christian dies?

"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side" – Luke 16:22

What should our attitude be toward death?

"...we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it" – 2 Corinthians 5:6-9

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain"
– Philippians 1:21

Final Thoughts:

Some people are so in bondage to fearing death that they cannot enjoy life. Christians can live a victorious life knowing that God walks with them, and has prepared a wonderful eternity in His presence when they vacate "this earthly tent". On the other hand, those who deny Jesus Christ, and choose not to put their faith and trust in Him for salvation have every reason to fear dying without Him. Trust Him today!

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*I'm gonna live for today
I'm gonna follow in Your way
I'm gonna let my little light shine
Like there's no tomorrow
I won't worry about the past
I know my future is intact
So I'll choose to live
my life one way
I'm gonna live it for today³*

³ Chorus from "Live For Today" by Natalie Grant from the album, *Awaken*