



professor of hymnology at the Florida Bible Institute for four years in the 1920s.<sup>[6][7]</sup> After his retirement, he remained involved in speaking and in religious gatherings.<sup>[1][7]</sup> Van DeVenter published more than 60 hymns in his lifetime, but "I Surrender All" is his most famous.<sup>[8]</sup>

"I Surrender All" was put to music by Weeden, and first published in 1896 in *Gospel Songs of Grace and Glory*, a collection of old and new hymns by various hymnists, compiled by Weeden, Van DeVenter, and Leonard Weaver, and published by Sebring Publishing Co.<sup>[9]</sup> The following year, Van DeVenter and Weeden also published their jointly written gospel hymn "Sunlight".<sup>[10]</sup> Weeden, born in Ohio in 1847, taught in singing schools prior to becoming an evangelist, and was a noted song leader and vocalist.<sup>[1]</sup> Weeden published many hymns in several volumes, including *The Peacemaker* (1894), *Songs of the Peacemaker* (1895), and *Songs of Sovereign Grace* (1897). His tombstone is inscribed with the title of this hymn, "I Surrender All".<sup>[1]</sup>

Judson W. Van DeVenter

## Contemporary usage

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"I Surrender All" has continued to appear in numerous English-language hymnals since its publication.<sup>[11][12]</sup> It is both a classic hymn and, due to its gospel-like nature, also one that is performed by churches that prefer contemporary music.<sup>[12]</sup>

In the late 1930s, when popular international evangelist Billy Graham was a student at Florida Bible Institute, he studied and fellowshiped with Judson Van DeVenter, and later stated that Van DeVenter greatly influenced his early preaching.<sup>[1][7][13]</sup> Graham subsequently popularized "I Surrender All" in his massive crusades and revivals, beginning in the late 1940s.<sup>[14][15][16]</sup>

In 1986, pop singer Deniece Williams, who had had a No. 1 hit the previous year with "Let's Hear It for the Boy", released an album of gospel songs, titled *So Glad I Know*. Her performance of "I Surrender All" on the album won the Grammy Award for Best Female Soul Gospel Performance.<sup>[17][18]</sup>

Oprah Winfrey has stated that the hymn played a pivotal role in her life.<sup>[19]</sup> While she was still a minor Chicago talk-show host, she had auditioned for the role of Sofia in the 1985 film *The Color Purple*, and desperately wanted the part. After being told that real actresses were being considered instead, she went to a weight-loss camp to slim down in a last effort to be considered. As she ran on the track, she surrendered her desperate desire to God and sang "I Surrender All" until it brought her a sense of peace and release. When she went back indoors, Steven Spielberg was on the phone offering her the part.<sup>[19][20][21]</sup> For her performance in the film, Winfrey was nominated for an Academy Award and a Golden Globe in 1986, and later that year her talk show was renamed for her, expanded to a full hour, and broadcast nationwide.<sup>[22][23]</sup> In 2005, when singer Faith Hill appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, during rehearsals Winfrey discovered Hill also had a passion for the hymn, and she had her sing it on her *Oprah After the Show* television program.<sup>[21]</sup>

## Notable recordings

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- Mahalia Jackson, on her album *The Forgotten Recordings* (posthumous compilation, 2005)
- Andraé Crouch, on his album *Live in London* (1978)
- Little Richard, on his album *God's Beautiful City* (1979)
- Deniece Williams, on her album *So Glad I Know* (1986) (Grammy Award for Best Soul Gospel Performance, Female)

- Glen Campbell, on his albums *Favorite Hymns* (1989) and *Home at Last* (1989)
- Cece Winans, on her album *Alone in His Presence* (1995)
- Carman, on his album *I Surrender All: 30 Classic Hymns* (1997)
- The Holmes Brothers, on their album *Promised Land* (1997)
- Ruben Studdard, on his album *I Need an Angel* (2004)
- Amy Grant, on her album *Rock of Ages... Hymns and Faith* (2005)
- Oslo Gospel Choir, on their live album *We Lift Our Hands* (2005)
- Brian Littrell, on the album *WOW Hymns* (2007)
- Phil Driscoll, on his album *Songs in the Key of Worship* (2008)
- Michael W. Smith, with Coalo Zamorano, on his album *A New Hallelujah* (2008)
- Selah, on their album *You Deliver Me* (2009)
- Kathy Troccoli, on her album *Worshipsongs: 'Tis So Sweet* (2013)
- Newsboys, on their album *Hallelujah for the Cross* (2014)
- June Hunt, on her album *Songs of Surrender*

## Text

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Theological historian Charles H. Lippy notes that the hymn's text expresses values of "victorious life" concepts of late 19th-century evangelism.<sup>[24][25]</sup> The victorious life entailed total surrender to Divine will in order to triumph over the problems of daily existence. Lippy summarizes this as follows: "[T]hrough absolute surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit, by giving the self over to possession by the supernatural, one could triumph and thus attain power and control over the course of one's life."<sup>[24]</sup>

In keeping with the gospel tradition, "I Surrender All" repeats key words throughout the hymn. Each stanza begins with "All to Jesus I surrender". The hymn's chorus repeats "I surrender all" three times, and an additional two times in the men's part. The entire hymn, if sung with each refrain and second-voice part, contains the word "surrender" 30 times, and the word "all" 43 times.<sup>[8]</sup>

The hymn's first stanza stresses complete surrender: "All to him I freely give". The second stanza surrenders worldly pleasures, and the third prays to "feel the Holy Spirit". Stanza four asks to be filled with Jesus's love, power, and blessing. In the fifth stanza, the singer feels "the sacred flame" – an image of the Holy Spirit – and the joy of "full salvation" born of surrender.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Lyrics

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All to Jesus I surrender,  
 All to him I freely give;  
 I will ever love and trust him,  
 In his presence daily live.

### *Refrain:*

I surrender all,  
 I surrender all,  
 All to thee, my blessed Savior,  
 I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender,  
 Humbly at his feet I bow,  
 Worldly pleasures all forsaken,

Take me, Jesus, take me now.  
(Refrain)

All to Jesus I surrender;  
Make me, Savior, wholly thine;  
Let me feel the Holy Spirit,  
Truly know that thou art mine.  
(Refrain)

All to Jesus I surrender,  
Lord, I give myself to thee,  
Fill me with thy love and power,  
Let thy blessing fall on me.  
(Refrain)

All to Jesus I surrender;  
Now I feel the sacred flame.  
Oh, the joy of full salvation!  
Glory, glory, to his name!  
(Refrain)<sup>[9][26]</sup>

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## External links

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- Performance by Faith Hill (<http://www.crosswalk.com/music-video/faith-hill-in-a-stunning-performance-of-i-surrender-all.html>) on *Oprah After the Show* (2005)
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