

God in the Jukebox

“Spirit in the Sky” by Norman Greenbaum

When I die and they lay me to rest
Gonna go to the place that's the best
When I lay me down to die
Goin' up to the spirit in the sky

Goin' up to the spirit in the sky (spirit in the sky)
That's where I'm gonna go when I die (when I die)
When I die and they lay me to rest
I'm gonna go to the place that's the best

Prepare yourself you know it's a must
Gotta have a friend in Jesus
So you know that when you die
He's gonna recommend you
To the spirit in the sky (spirit in the sky)

Oh he'll recommend you to the spirit in the sky
That's where you're gonna go when you die (when you die)
When you die and they lay you to rest
You're gonna go to the place that's the best

Never been a sinner, I never sinned
I got a friend in Jesus
So you know that when I die
He's gonna set me up
with the spirit in the sky

Oh set me up with the spirit in the sky (spirit in the sky)
That's where I'm gonna go when I die (when I die)
When I die and they lay me to rest
I'm gonna go to the place that's the best
Go to the place that's the best

Charts

Billboard: #3 (1970)

Background

"Spirit in the Sky" is a song written and originally recorded by Norman Greenbaum and released in late 1969. The single became a gold record, selling two million copies from 1969 to 1970 and reached number three in the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 chart (April 18, 1970) where it lasted for 15 weeks in the Top 100.

Rolling Stone ranked "Spirit in the Sky" No. 333 on their list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.

Greenbaum had previously been a member of psychedelic jug band Dr. West's Medicine Show and Junk Band. When they split up he won a solo contract with producer Erik Jacobsen, who had previously worked successfully with The Lovin' Spoonful. He was inspired to write the song after watching Porter Wagoner on TV singing a gospel song. Greenbaum later said: "I thought, 'Yeah, I could do that,' knowing nothing about gospel music, so I sat down and wrote my own gospel song. It came easy. I wrote the words in 15 minutes."

"Spirit in the Sky" contains lyrics about the afterlife, making several references to Jesus, although Greenbaum is Jewish.

Theology

Heaven – “Gonna go to the place that's the best” and “Goin' up to the spirit in the sky”

Sin – “Never been a sinner I never sinned”

Romans 3:22b-23 – For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Justification – “I got a friend in Jesus”

²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. ³¹ Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law. (Romans 3:24-31)