

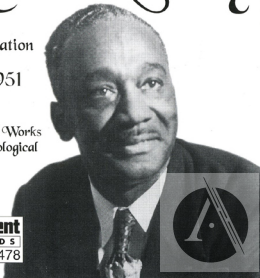
Rev. Kelsey

And
His
Congregation

1947-1951

Complete
Recorded Works
In Chronological
Order

document
RECORDS
DOCD-5478



Rev. Kelsey follows in a long line of recording artists who came from the Church Of God In Christ (COGIC). The COGIC movement, which is a predominately black Pentecostal church, originated from the Holiness movement and was established during the late 19th century by a preacher named Charles H. Mason who led Holiness churches in Jackson, Miss., and Memphis, Tenn. From these beginnings the Church has grown into the largest and most important independent black church in the world.

Prior to the 2nd World War the singing preachers were recorded in large numbers but during the late 40's they appear to have gone out of fashion and were little recorded and it wasn't until the mid 50's that they were to start recording again in any significant numbers.

This CD contains the ten singles issued by Rev. Kelsey and Lena Phillips, who was a member of his church, and part of the wedding ceremony of Sister Rosetta Tharpe, at which the Rev. Kelsey officiated.

Rev. Kelsey's recordings are important in the progression of gospel music and represent almost the last examples of singles in the old style preaching & singing, and are masterpieces of story and song packed into the grooves of a 78 rpm record. His few recordings are also arguably the very best of the *genre*.

Rev. Kelsey's first session was probably recorded at his Church (The Temple Church Of God In Christ) in Washington, December 1947 and the records issued from this session appear to come from his weekly service and were issued as "Rev. Kelsey And His Congregation".

"**Old Ship Of Zion**", "**Babylon**" and "**Hide My Soul**" mainly feature the Congregation with (on "Zion") a brief interlude by Rev. Kelsey. "**Lord Send The Rain**" and "**Lord I've Tried**" feature the vocal of Lena Phillips. "**I'm A Soldier**" and "**Little Boy**" feature the Rev. Kelsey preaching and singing and as soon as you hear his rasping voice drawing our attention to the "Second Chapter Of Timothy, Second Verse" you know you're in for something special.

The second session c. 1948 probably also come from one of his services and MGM appear to have purchased these tracks from Super Disc. This session (also as Rev. Kelsey

And His Congregation) featured Lena Phillips on three tracks "After Awhile", "I'm Striving To Make It To The Promised Land" and "All That I Have Is In Jesus", the other five tracks again feature Rev. Kelsey in very fine voice.

It was probably a natural thing for the best Holiness preacher of the era to officiate at the wedding of the best Holiness female performer, so on the 3rd July 1951 in Washington, Rev. Kelsey performed the marriage ceremony of Sister Rosetta Tharpe. It was a touch of genius to record this ceremony and in front of an estimated 25,000 paying guests at an open-air service in Griffith Park she married Russell Morrison. Decca issued the service in three variations, on 4 x 78 rpm, a boxed 78 rpm set and an LP, these also included (amongst others) the Harmonizing Four and Sunset Harmonizers.

Rev. Kelsey performs the ceremony with tremendous flourish and great one-liners; "I Know How To Marry People, I Know How To Put Them Together, If They Don't Stay Together It's Not My Fault".

His last singles were recorded a few weeks later for Decca and these six tracks close off the CD, if anything Rev. Kelsey's singing is even more intense on these than the earlier material.

In the mid-1960's there were a series of Gospel tours of Europe and the 1965 one featured (the now) Bishop Samuel Kelsey, Lena Phillips, Rev. Little and other members of his Washington church. Nobody who saw this tour will forget the excitement generated by Bishop Kelsey and the powerhouse sermons of the Rev. Little, fortunately the concert in Bremen, Germany was recorded and issued in Europe by Fontana.

Bishop Kelsey was only to record once more and this was from his church in June 1965 and Polydor issued (again only available in Europe) one of the greatest choir albums ever recorded, featuring both Bishop Kelsey and more powerhouse vocals by Rev. Little along with some tremendous choir and congregational singing.

Although not recorded again the Bishop continued his services which were transmitted every Sunday over the local Washington radio station, anyone hearing them will confirm that he had lost none of his charisma.

Bob Laughton

1. Old Ship Of Zion	MF 128-C1-Scoop 503	(A)	3:36
2. Hide My Soul	MF 129-C1-Super Disc 1057	(D)	2:51
3. Lord Send The Rain	MF 130-C1-Super Disc 1051	(B)	3:04
4. I'm A Soldier	MF 155-C1-Scoop 500	(A)	2:25
5. Lord I've Tried	MF 154-C1-Scoop 503	(C)	2:57
6. Babylon	MF 155-C1-Scoop 500	(D)	3:13
7. Tell Me How Long	48-S-254-MGM 10905	(E)	3:01
8. Evening Prayer	48-S-256-MGM 10905	(E)	2:28
9. The Storm Is Passing Over	48-S-255-MGM 10429	(E)	2:42
10. Little Boy	MF 152-C1-Super Disc 1057	(A)	2:57
11. Heaven Is Mine	48-S-242-MGM 10568	(E)	2:47
12. I'm A Soldier	48-S-257-MGM 10797	(E)	2:41
13. I'm Striving To Make It To The Promised Land	48-S-259-MGM 10429	(F)	5:06
14. All That I Have Is In Jesus	48-S-240-MGM 10568	(F)	2:44
15. After Awhile	48-S-258-MGM 10797	(F)	2:52
16. Marriage Prologue And Benediction	81627-A-DL-5382	(G)	} 12:19
Wedding Ceremony Pt. 1	81628-A-DL-5382	(H)	
Wedding Ceremony Pt. 2	81629-A-DL-5382	(H)	
17. I'm A Witness For My Lord	DW 81727-De 48256	(I)	2:45
18. I'm A Royal Child	DW 81728-De 48256	(I)	2:24
19. Where Is The Lion In The Tribe Of Judah	DW 81729-De 28339	(I)	2:25
20. Shine For Jesus	DW 81730-De 28339	(I)	3:08
21. Little Boy	DW 81731-De 48277	(I)	2:15
22. Low Down The Chariot	DW 81732-De 48277	(I)	2:22

NOTE: *Little Boy* was issued on Super Disc 1057 and MGM 10250. Both versions are exactly the same.

PERSONNEL:

- A: Rev. Kelsey And His Congregation: Rev. Kelsey, preaching and singing with the Congregation of The Temple Church of God In Christ, Washington, D.C.; acc. Clifton Chandler, th; unknown, pno. _____ Washington, DC, _____ December 1947
- B: Lena Phillips (from Rev. Kelsey's Church), vcl; acc. unknown, pno. _____ Washington, DC, _____ December 1947
- C: Mixed Choir with Lena Phillips, lead vcl. _____ Washington, DC, _____ December 1947
- D: Congregational singing. _____ Washington, DC, _____ December 1947
- E: Same as for A. _____ Washington, DC, _____ October 1948
- F: Lena Phillips, vcl; acc. unknown, pno. _____ Washington, DC, _____ October 1948
- G: Rev. Kelsey, speech; Bishop Wells, Benediction; with unknown, pno, org. _____ Washington, DC, _____ 3/11/1951
- H: Rev. Kelsey, speech; uraac; Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Russell Morrison, comments. _____ Washington, DC., 3/11/1951
- I: Rev. Kelsey And His Congregation: Rev. Kelsey, preaching and singing with the Congregation of The Temple Church of God In Christ, Washington, D.C.; acc. prob. Clifton Chandler, th; unknown, pno; unknown, d, unknown, tams. _____ Washington, DC., 14 October 1951

Original recordings from the collections of Prof. David Evans, Ben Kaplan, Dr. Fritz Mühlöcker, Johnny Parth, Ken Romanowski, Doug Scroff, Chris Strachwitz, Paul Swinton.