

At Christmas: The Message Is In the Music

By: Dan Nelson

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

It's finally here. The season of candy canes and decorated evergreens, wish lists and shopping trips, now culminates into a weekend of festivity and memory making. It's Christmas time: among my favorite times of the year. And the message itself seems to be said best through the carols that are sung each year at this time.

Hark! The herald angels sing "Glory to the newborn King!" Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled! Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Hark the herald angels sing "Glory to the newborn King!"

Will we respond to that exhortation and agree with the angels concerning this eternal truth? Will we as a nation rise to join the triumph of the skies? Check out this verse from the same song:

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord; Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the Virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate Deity, Pleas'd as man with man to dwell; Jesus, our Emmanuel!

The word "Emmanuel" means "God with us". The lyrics describe that Jesus is deity in human flesh, dwelling among men, in order to ultimately save mankind. Wow! This is directly out of the Bible. I wonder how it is possible to grow up celebrating Christmas without worshipping Jesus! Consider the message in this next well-known song:

Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing. Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns; Let men their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains, repeat the sounding joy. He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love.

Each time we sing this carol or hear it sung by others, the call to prepare room in our hearts for the Savior of the world goes forth. Our response to this invitation to join in with creation in professing the King's reign of truth and grace will have profound impact on whether one is a citizen of the Kingdom described or not. The real ongoing miracle of Christmas is in the changed lives that result from bowing to the authority of the King of kings.

It seems that everybody knows the song Silent Night. The third verse reminds us of Who Jesus really is and the throne of grace that we access in prayer and worship.

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light. Radiant beams from thy holy

face, With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus Lord at thy birth.

If the theme of the song is true, and Jesus truly was Lord at birth, and His mission is to redeem the world through grace as Scripture instructs, then the welcome of this infamous chorus will be responded to by those that are truly seeking relationship with God:

O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem. Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels. O Come let us adore Him: Christ the Lord.

As you watch the classic holiday movies on television and DVD, exchange gifts, and eat ham, let Christ be the core of Christmas, and make the day a Holy-day. Christmas Eve candlelight services are held at various churches in our community, and because Christmas lands on a Sunday this year, there are added opportunities to be among those answering the call of the faithful, as the carol implores. Christmas morning services are offered at many locations across the valley, or if you don't have a home church, you are welcome to join me in Libby Park at 11AM. Merry Christ-mas and Happy Holy-day!

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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Sunday Worship:

9:00 & 10:45am

Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

Mid-Week Study:

7:00pm Thursday

Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View