

# Music At Christmas

As we continue our discussion of celebrating Christmas we must talk about music. Christmas music is its own classification but what is the real purpose? Today we are talking about music at Christmas.

## Introduction

This year we have decided to do something a little different than the traditional Advent messages leading up to Christmas. Instead, we are talking about different aspects of Christmas. The first week we talked about Christmas as an altar of remembrance and the second week we discussed the symbols and traditions of Christmas. This week we are going to discuss the music at Christmas. Next week, we will share the Christmas story including the main prophecies of the birth of Christ and then the story of His birth. Let's jump into the music at Christmas.

Today we are going to talk about what music is, music in the Bible, how music tells stories, and how music is the perfect vehicle to share and remember things.

## Music Is

Music is an amazing thing. We remember songs. We feel the beat and the rhythm of the instruments. We dance to it and we use our voice as an instrument as we sing. Music takes up residence in our minds and our hearts. I think that is why it is so easily remembered.

It is really amazing when you look at all the types of music and the creativity involved in playing music and singing. Just about anything can be an instrument. I have seen people use garbage cans and buckets on the street being played like drums. I have seen people in different cultures fashion different stringed instruments and different flutes.

Music really draws you in. I remember when I was a young man an annual fair I would go to every Autumn in Puyallup, Washington. It was one of the largest fairs in the western United States. They had big concerts every night of famous bands and singers. There was rock, country, pop, gospel, and more. I went to a few of these concerts over the years. But my favorite music at the fair was by one of the BBQ places I ate at. There were musicians from the Andes mountains in Chile in South America. They played mostly with different flutes. I really enjoyed that and looked forward to hearing them year after year.

Music is very identifiable, too. There is are distinct sounds from different instruments and types of music. The banjo is a very unique sounding instrument and integral to the Blue Grass style of music. Of course, one of my favorites, the bagpipes are quite unique. People either love the bagpipes or hate them. I love them. If I want time alone at home, I turn on some bagpipe music and the rest of my family heads out. When you hear steel drums you think of the Caribbean and your mind drifts away to a sandy beach. That's what music does. It helps carry you away in your mind and your heart.

## Music in the Bible

Music is the result of great creativity and it should be no surprise that God used music in the life of the Israelites and has since instilled musical talent in many people to share His goodness with others. Often it is used as a celebration, sometimes even before a battle is fought. That is what is recorded in 2 Chronicles 20:21-22.



## 2 Chronicles 20:21-22

(21) After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever." (22) As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.

A large army from Syria was coming to fight God's people. King Jehosophat instructing his people to go to battle singing. God's people marched toward battle with songs of celebration in their hearts. They believed the Lord had already won the battle before they got there, and He had.

King David was a musician himself. He wrote many of the psalms, many of which were to be set to music. Many of our current modern worship and praise songs are verses taken right out of psalms and set to music. We read in Psalm 68:24-26:

## Psalms 68:24-26

(24) Your procession, God, has come into view, the procession of my God and King into the sanctuary. (25) In front are the singers, after them the musicians; with them are the young women playing the timbrels. (26) Praise God in the great congregation; praise the LORD in the assembly of Israel.

God leads with song and this is why we start most conventional church gatherings with singing and instruments. Music at Christmas is the same, too. I am sure when the heavenly host appeared to the shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus there was singing and music with their praises.

Music has the ability to tell stories and people remember them. Music at Christmas is no different.

## Telling Stories

I remember when I first said yes to Jesus, there was a pastor on staff at the church I was part of that had memorized the Bible. Children enjoyed testing him and would ask him obscure verses and he would quote them as if he were reading it. I always thought that was amazing. Many of us have difficulty memorizing things like that. A common tool of learning and remembering something is to put it to music. How many children learn their alphabet letters by singing the "ABCs"? When I was a child, television had animated shorts between cartoons on Saturday mornings called Schoolhouse Rock which taught numbers, grammar, and history lessons all set to music. I still remember those songs 45 years later.

Many of our hymns were originally for the same purpose. During the dark ages, most people did not know how to read or write. The only way people could learn the scriptures was to hear the stories set to music and then share them with others the same way.

Our hymns and modern praise songs and choruses serve the same purpose. It is a great way to learn Biblical truths and celebrate God and His goodness. The music at Christmas is exactly like this. Christmas music tells the story of Jesus' birth. It speaks of the prophecies and the fulfillment of those prophecies.

Music at Christmas helps us get our hearts and minds in the right place to celebrate the birth of our savior and share the story of his birth and all the events that surrounded it. We can share the story of Jesus Christ through music and celebrate God at the same time through the music at Christmas.



## Music Is The Perfect Vehicle

People are open to hearing the story of Jesus at Christmas time. The fact that music comes from the heart and permeates the soul makes it the perfect way to share Christ's story. The music at Christmas readies our hearts for the spirit of God to move in us. It keeps us thinking about Christ and gives us a bit of His perspective on the world.

We can celebrate Christ through music and people can easily join in. Music gets tied to events and as people celebrate later, they will remember these songs. They will start singing them and further tell the story of Jesus.

Singing spreads joy. Joy is at the heart of the birth of Jesus. The angels said to the shepherds that they brought good news that will cause great joy among all people. That great news was the birth of our savior. The great joy was displayed by the praises of the angel. It is now displayed by the music of Christmas from God's people.

The vehicle of music is a strong one. It can be used for many things. The most important is the telling of the story of Jesus and God's redemption of mankind.

## Conclusion

Music at Christmas is the perfect way to spread joy and share the start of the gospel of Jesus Christ with others and invite them into a conversation about why He came, the life and ministry He lived, and the price He paid so that we could return to God for eternity.

