

KEEP ON CAROLLING

We sing Christmas carols in December – but the song Jesus puts in our hearts goes on and on and on.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ Dictionary definitions of the word ‘carol’ vary:
 - “religious folk song or popular hymn, particularly one associated with Christmas” (Oxford);
 - “...a song of joy or mirth; a popular song or ballad of religious joy” (Merriam-Webster).
- ❖ Whatever the definition, we are familiar with the term ‘Christmas carol’, and many enjoy singing joyful songs as we celebrate Christ’s birth.
- ❖ Some Christmas carols focus on the night of Jesus’ birth – “Silent Night”, for example,
- ❖ Others, like “Once in Royal David’s City” and “Who is He?” chronicle Jesus’ birth, life, death, resurrection and the salvation He brought to us.
- ❖ “Oh Holy Night”, “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” and “Joy to the World” rehearse blessings promised by the arrival of God in flesh – hope, joy, peace, goodwill, unity, and the divine rule of God on Earth.
- ❖ Every year, songwriters create new lyrics and music to tell the Christmas story their way.
- ❖ Since songs are ‘poetry set to music’, a poem can be considered a song without music – and from ancient times prophets have been writing poetic predictions of the coming of the Christ, the Anointed One.
- ❖ Isaiah ‘sings’ of the coming child (9:6-7):
 - For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given;
 - And the government will be upon His shoulder.
 - And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
 - ⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace
 - There will be no end, Upon the throne of David
 - and over His kingdom...
- ❖ Jeremiah adds a ‘song’ in chapter 33:15-16:
 - ‘In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness;
 - He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely.
 - And this *is the name* by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.’
- ❖ David, Daniel, Micah and other Old Testament writers add their own verses of song.
- ❖ Centuries later, the angel Gabriel came to God’s people, now living under Roman rule (see Luke 1).
- ❖ First, he told Zechariah the Priest that his barren wife, Elizabeth, would conceive and bear a son (John “the Baptist”; Luke 1:5-23).

KEY SCRIPTURES: Luke 1 & 2; Isaiah 9:2-7; Jeremiah 33:14-17

- ❖ Then he told Mary – a young virgin engaged to be married – that *she* would bear a son “of the Holy Ghost” and that her cousin Elizabeth was six months pregnant.
- ❖ Mary traveled to visit Elizabeth and as soon as she arrived, Elizabeth began to ‘sing’:
 - “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!⁴³ But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
 - ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord” (Lk. 1:42-45).
- ❖ Mary responded with a song of her own:
 - “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
 - ⁴⁸For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. ⁴⁹For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy *is* His name... ⁵⁴He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of *His* mercy...” (Lk. 1:46-55).
- ❖ On the night Mary gave birth to Jesus, her promised son, angels appeared in the heavens. They also had a ‘song’ (Lk. 2:14):
 - “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”
- ❖ These songs we call “Christmas carols” are typically sung at only one time of the year.
- ❖ But the message of Christ and His love began at the beginning and will hold true for all of eternity. So keep on caroling!

REFLECTION TOOLS

1. How do the lyrics of your favourite Christmas carol(s) remind/encourage you about God’s love to humankind (you) and His purpose in coming to Earth as a baby?
2. Write your own ‘lyrics’ about the love of God throughout human history, in your own life and in His promises for the future. Read the words aloud as a song you sing to Him.

Prayer Time

My soul magnifies You, my Lord, and my spirit rejoices because You are my Saviour.
Blessed be Your name!

WEEK OF SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2018

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week’s message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.



PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline

Start-up: What song(s) do you find it hard to stop singing once you start?