



21 Hope-filled Carols That
Celebrate Christmas

Christmas

CAROLS



Christmas

Christmas. For many of us, the word conjures up happy memories. Good times—simpler times.

Things seem more complicated now. Life is harder, less certain, and more fearful. Pandemic, politics, protests... We can still put up the Christmas lights and light the candles, but the world does seem darker than it used to be.

In difficult times, we look for hope—something to hold on to, something to look forward to, something or someone that can say to us, “It will get better”. But where to find it? Well, to discover real hope this Christmas, look to... the first Christmas. To quote one of the carols in this booklet, we can look back at Jesus being born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago and say, “The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight”. Why? Because of who Jesus was and is. One Bible writer, who knew Jesus extremely well, described his arrival in this world like this:

“We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John chapter 1 verse 14)

1. HE CAME FROM THE FATHER

Do things feel a bit out of control? If blind chemical processes are all there is—if there’s nothing behind what we can see—then that’s all we can expect. But if there is a divine being who made everything, then there is someone bigger than this life and someone able to direct this world. The first Christmas says that there is such a God—a God of relationship: Father, Son and Spirit. “The one and only Son” came

from heaven to earth to show us that he is there, and that he is in control. But... if God is in control, what is he doing?

2. HE IS FULL OF GRACE

What is God like? “Full of grace”—that is, full of overwhelming kindness. Because he’s full of kindness, God is moving things towards the day when he will remake this world perfectly. No more uncertainty, fear, pain or death—only joy and peace. Because he’s full of kindness, Jesus was born to do everything necessary to invite us into that future world. Because he’s full of kindness, Jesus offers the forgiveness we all need for the ways we’ve all lived as if this is a world in which we, not God, are in charge.

Christmas tells you that one day things will be better than they have ever been; and that God is inviting you to enjoy it with him.

3. HE IS FULL OF TRUTH

It’s hard to find your way in the dark. And sometimes life feels as if we have taken a sudden turn off a well-lit road and on to some dark, unfamiliar country lanes. Enter Jesus, “full of truth”. He knows the way we need to take and the decisions we need to make. He offers us guidance and confidence in life.

So, here’s the Bible’s claim: Christmas brings hope. If the Bible’s true, Jesus brings us the hope we’re all looking for. But *is* it true? Why not find out more for yourself—you have nothing to lose, and a lot of hope to gain.

To find out more: christianityexplored.org

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*“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

Isaiah 9:6

1. Angels From the Realms of Glory

Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye, who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:

*Come and worship,
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!*

Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant Light:

Come and worship...

Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great desire of nations;
Ye have seen his natal star:

Come and worship...

Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear;
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In his temple shall appear:

Come and worship...

Suggested key: F
Starting note: A

2. As With Gladness Men of Old

As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold,
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright,
So, most gracious God, may we
Evermore be led to thee.

As with joyful steps they sped,
To that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before
Thee whom heaven and earth adore,
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek thy mercy-seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
At that manger rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

Holy Jesus, every day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And, when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds thy glory hide.

In the heavenly country bright
Need they no created light;
Thou its Light, its Joy, its Crown;
Thou its Sun, which goes not down.
There for ever may we sing
Hallelujahs to our King.

Suggested key: G
Starting note: G

3. Away in a Manger

Away in a manger,
No crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus
Laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky
Looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus
Asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing,
The baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus,
No crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus!
Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle
Until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus;
I ask thee to stay
Close by me for ever,
And love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children
In thy tender care,
And take us to heaven
To live with thee there.

Suggested key: F
Starting note: C

4. Ding Dong! Merrily On High

Ding dong! Merrily on high,
In heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! Verily the sky
Is riv'n with angel singing.

Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!
Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swung,
And "i-o, i-o, i-o!"
By priest and people sung.

Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!
Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!

Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rhyme
Your evetime song, ye singers.

Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!
Gloria, hosanna in excelsis!

Suggested key: G
Starting note: G

5. The First Noel

The first Noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds
In fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep:

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star,
Shining in the east, beyond them far:
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night:

Noel, Noel...

And by the light of that same star,
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went:

Noel, Noel...

This star drew nigh to the north-west;
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay:

Noel, Noel...

Then entered in those wise men three,
Fell reverently upon their knee,
And offered there in his presence
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense:

Noel, Noel...

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
That hath made heaven and earth of nought,
And with his blood mankind hath bought:

Noel, Noel...

Suggested key: C
Starting note: E