

## Christmas Carols Often Reflect the Cosy Imagery of Happy Christmases – But They Tell Us Important Truths

### Truths From Carols

I must say that I get slightly browned off, each year, when hearing the same old Christmas carols played everywhere, and then find myself singing them – the same ones several times, perhaps; and some are not really tunes I would consider the best, or the words. But I have to admit that, on reflection, some of the most ubiquitous carry an important message, and not one that is hidden or obscure.

Consider *Once In Royal David's City*, which can sound very mournful. It (and there are certainly others) help us in the important task of connecting the Christmas story, and all its cosy imagery, with the fact of our eventual destiny:

*Not in that poor lowly stable,  
With the oxen standing by,  
We shall see him; but in heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high ...*

It helps us see beyond the baby Jesus, docile animals, and cleaned-up shepherds, to the eternal glory that Christmas, Jesus's incarnation, alone makes possible. It reminds us of the important truth that in the end, we *will* see him face to face (and *not* as a baby) ... and stand in his presence. And this also reminds us of another thing central to Christianity, but easily overlooked: that our destiny, and our salvation, is personal and individual. Sadly, so many in our world are mired in the materialist/"Humanist" understanding, whereby humans exist temporarily, accidentally, and have no significance, whatever, and certainly not as individuals.

Fortunately, we presently have one advantage: that shopping centres, stores, and a dozen other public places, for a fortnight or so each year, resound to songs that spell out the real, *eternal*, message of Christmas and the familiar crib-side images – a message that is direct to each individual one of us.

New Year 2013