

**Sub some really obnoxious Christmas music for our regular bumper? Maybe this?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xam01uaj6Vg> 😊

**Michelle:** Welcome to A Word Fitly Spoken, a podcast about Jesus, His Word, and our joy in following Him. I'm Michelle Lesley.

**Amy:** And I'm Amy Spreeman. Well, Michelle, what did you think of our new bumper music for Christmas?

*Banter*

**Amy:** Well, when it comes to Christmas music, there are some songs we absolutely love ... and others ...eh... not so much. So tonight, Michelle and I thought we would share with you a few of our favorite Christmas carols and songs, and some we'd really rather do without. And we'll put the links to each of these songs in the show notes.

Which Christmas song is at the top of your list of favorites, Michelle?

**Michelle:** For me, it just wouldn't be Christmas without *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*. That one is my all time favorite.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hRq3vy7l-4&list=PLkRlOSORxRiBOvxdu1bZhoglVRtnxdjVf&index> (This one has a really long intro. You might want to fade it in or start it around the 0:44 mark. Go through first verse. Fade out or stop at 1:47.)

Amy, do you remember our 2022 episode called Christmas Mythbusters? One of the items we tackled in that episode was whether or not the angels who appeared to the shepherds actually *sang*, because the Bible doesn't explicitly say they did.

Luke 2:10 says, "And the angel **said** to them..." and verse 12 says the angels were "praising God and **saying**...". But there's no reason they couldn't also have been singing, so, hark, maybe the herald angels really did sing.

But that aside, the reason this is my favorite Christmas song really has nothing to do with the angels, it's because this hymn is saturated with good, deep theology. It is very gospel centered. Here are just a few of my favorite phrases from the three stanzas most of us are familiar with:

God and sinners reconciled  
Veiled in flesh the godhead see, hail th' incarnate deity  
Mild, He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die  
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth

Now, as I mentioned, there are three stanzas to this song which are the ones that are most often used and published, but did you know there are at least two additional stanzas? (There might be more!) And those two are just as beautiful and chock full of gospel-centered theology as the

others. Let me read them to you:

Come, Desire of nations, come,  
Fix in us Thy humble home;  
Rise, the woman's conqu'ring Seed,  
Bruise in us the serpent's head.  
Now display Thy saving power,  
Ruined nature now restore;  
Now in mystic union join  
Thine to ours, and ours to Thine.

Adam's likeness, Lord, efface,  
Stamp Thine image in its place:  
Second Adam from above,  
Reinstate us in Thy love.  
Let us Thee, though lost, regain,  
Thee, the Life, the inner man:  
O, to all Thyself impart,  
Formed in each believing heart.

Is that not gorgeous? It's like singing a systematic theology book.

**Amy gives input/banter**

**Michelle:** What about you, Amy, what's your favorite Christmas carol or song?

**Amy: First Favorite - Silent Night**

There are so many classics, like The First Noel, Oh Holy Night, Etc., and I especially like the hymn, Come thou long expected Jesus. But my favorite is still Silent night....((Music)

<https://youtu.be/iRZOv31n1sY> That was the Winchester Cathedral Boy's Choir.

It was written in 1816 in Austria not as a Christmas song but as a poem by the Austrian priest Josef Mohr called "Stille Nacht" (my late FIL used to sing the entire thing in German) - but the original poem was about peace after a brutal war. Two years later - so the story goes - when the church organ broke down on Christmas eve in 1818, Josef asked Franz Gruber to compose a melody to the poem. Gruber wrote the arrangement in an afternoon. The congregants gathered and sang that tune, along with a children's choir, and a guitar for accompaniment.

**Michelle gives input/banter -** Amy, I remember when I was a little kid, we watched an animated movie on the story behind Silent Night in school. And I actually found it on YouTube and watched it, so we'll put the link to that in the show notes for you, listeners. A little Christmas present from us to you.

And it's a hymn with good theology, too. At our church - and I think other churches may do this, too - at our candlelight Christmas Eve service, the very last thing we do is sing Silent Night and

we each light the candle of the person next to us. It's just so beautiful.

**Amy:** We do that too!

OK, that's one favorite for each of us. Michelle what's the Christmas song that has you scrambling for the "off" button?

**Michelle:** There are soooo many to choose from, but I think, for me, one of them would have to be *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*. And the worst cover of it is definitely Bruce Springsteen's.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76WFkKp8Tjs&list=PLkRlOSORxRiB1tmT52wze3KmF70qzb3l5&index=5> (Another long intro. Fade in or start at 0:46. Stop or fade out after first chorus at 1:55)

Now a number of our listeners would probably say *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* is their least favorite because they are anti-Santa all the way around, and that's totally understandable. In fact, a couple of years ago, we interviewed Justin Peters about his booklet *Santa Pause*, and there are a lot of biblical problems with the way some parents do Santa Claus with their kids today.

And one of those biblical problems is embodied in this song:

*He sees you when you're sleeping  
He knows when you're awake  
He knows if you've been bad or good  
So be good, for goodness' sake!*

Santa supposedly sees every child on the planet and knows what they're doing 24/7? Uh uh. No way. That's called omniscience, and omniscience is an incommunicable attribute of God - something only He is capable of.

He is the only One who has the power to see and know all things, and it is an insult and an affront to Him to even suggest that a mere mortal – let alone a fictional character – has the same power and knowledge that He has. In reverence and awe for God's preeminence, we should never ascribe to others the things that belong to God alone.

That is why, even though it has a catchy little jingle, I do not like that song.

**Amy gives input/banter**

**Michelle:** OK, Amy, what's that Christmas song you just can't stand?

**Amy: First Worst:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Nq0CuUKTjc>

**It's always a toss up - John Lennon's Happy X-mas the War is Over is right up there, along with that dreadful Mariah Carey song, ANYTHING by Pentatonix, and Christmas shoes. But the all-time worst for me is Barbara Streisand's Jingle Bells. Here's why:**

This is not even music in my opinion. It's like Babs was bored one day and thought, "I know, I'm going to make a ton of cash giving the world some hair-raising, angst-ridden cardiac palpitations."

**Michelle gives input/banter** - I mean, there are songs I hate more, but that is not good. I'll give her two things. One, the orchestration is really good. It's got a nice texture- you know, **if** you're into angst-ridden, cardiac palpitations. And two, I'm a professionally trained singer. That's what I was going to do for a living many many moons ago, and I can tell you, it's *very* difficult - especially for drawly, twangy little girls from the South - to enunciate and articulate as clearly as she does at that tempo. I don't think I could do it.

So the girl has chops. But, yeah, that's a jingle bell train wreck. That second verse where she alternates back and forth between fast and slow is - and I say this in all seriousness - sort of a musical illustration of what bi-polar disorder is like. But that's not what most people are looking for in a Christmas song.

**Amy:** Let's go back to favorites. Michelle, what's your second favorite?

**Michelle:** My second favorite is one most people probably aren't familiar with, so for this one, we're going to play the whole thing. It's called *It's About the Cross*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VyRolwO-nXc&list=PLkRlOSORxRiBOvxdu1bZhogLVRtnxdjVf&index=2>

I can hardly listen to that one without crying. "Every drop of blood that flowed from Him when it should have been me." That just stabs me right in the heart and makes me **so** deeply grateful for what Jesus did for me on the cross. And ladies, he did it for you, too.

I know most of you in our audience know that. You've been born again, and you belong to Christ. But maybe, in God's providence you stumbled across this episode and you don't know Christ. Or maybe you *think* you're saved, but you *aren't*, because you've gone to some so-called church or listened to some so-called preacher or Christian celebrity who didn't tell them the *truth* about how to know Christ. Well, Amy and I want to make sure you hear the truth today:

And the truth is, you are a sinner. You were born in sin and rebellion against the holy God of the universe, and you've also willfully *chosen* to break His law. You've lied. You've wanted and taken things that didn't belong to you, which is coveting and stealing. You've lusted after someone, which Jesus said is committing adultery in your heart. You've been sinfully angry, which Jesus says is committing murder in your heart. You've dishonored your parents. And that's only 6 of the 10 Commandments.

James 2:10 says, "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in *one point* has become guilty of all of it." So you're guilty of breaking *all* of God's law.

When you break the law, justice must be meted out. And the just punishment for rebellion against God is an eternity in Hell, which all of us *richly* deserve. And you can take that eternal death sentence for your sin, and serve it yourself if you want to, but I wouldn't recommend it.

Because God, who is rich in mercy, has provided another way out. A better way out. He sent His son, Jesus, to earth to live a perfect sinless life so He could take your death penalty *for* you. And that's just what He did on the cross. He died in your place. He took the punishment for your sin. And then he rose bodily from the grave on the third day afterward.

If you want to be right with God, have your sins forgiven, and stand clean before Him now and when you die,

you get with God,  
you confess your sin and rebellion against Him,  
you sorrowfully turn your heart and life away from sin and toward Him, believing that Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection paid the penalty for your sin,  
and you ask Him to save you.  
and He will.

You don't know when your life will be required of you. Your heart could stop in the next 5 seconds. Jesus could come back tomorrow. Anything could happen. And then it'll be too late. Do not go one more minute without repenting and believing the truth of the gospel.

And that's the heart of the song *It's About the Cross*, and that's why it's one of my favorites.

**Amy gives input/banter - *That is beautiful. How did you happen to come across this one? I wasn't familiar with it.***

**Michelle:** Amy, which song is your next favorite?

**Amy: *Second Favorite Mine is also one that many haven't heard of, but it is a very old choral piece for either a full choir or quartet. It's called O Magnum Mysterium.***

The words are in Latin, explaining the beauty and mystery of Jesus' birth. It is just a gorgeous piece to me, and was sung by our high school choir back when I wasn't a Christian, and the only thing I really knew about the true details of the Christmas story - beyond the cartoons from the 70s, came from the songs we sang back then. I know God in His providence used those songs and their harmonies to begin to draw me to Him.

((Plays song)) [https://youtu.be/cj8\\_2UiE-ew](https://youtu.be/cj8_2UiE-ew)

This song was composed sometime in the 13th century. Translated in English, it speaks of the mystery of the incarnation, witnessed by the animals in the manger. And yes, we know that Luke's account of what takes place that night does not mention animals. Nonetheless, when I hear about this song I do not think of cows and donkeys, but of the miracle of Christ's birth, as promised in the beginning.

O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament,  
that animals should see the new-born Lord, lying in a manger!  
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear Christ the Lord.  
Alleluia!

**Michelle gives input/banter** Amy, that is gorgeous! Today was the first time I had ever heard this. You know, earlier I mentioned our Christmas Mythbusters episode, and another one of the issues we addressed was whether or not Jesus was born in a stable. Bible scholars have determined that it was much more likely Jesus was born in the area of a home where the animals were brought in at night or when it was cold, and that's why there was a manger for Mary to put Jesus in.

**Amy interjects:** yes, I've heard some people say Isaiah 1:3 alludes to animals at the birth of Christ, it might be a stretch though. The verse says: The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."  
So it's not really clear....

**Michelle:** Right...And there wouldn't have been a manger if there weren't animals *somewhere* nearby. So I think that part about the animals witnessing Jesus' birth isn't in conflict with the biblical account. It's a beautiful song, and I love a capella singing, so that one is right up my alley.

**Amy:** OK Michelle, what's your next pick for worst Christmas song?

**Michelle:** I had never heard of this one until a year or two ago when a reader brought it to my attention. To me, it is absolutely appalling. It's called *The Most Inconvenient Christmas* by the Oak Ridge Boys, who I've loved since I was a child.

The first couple of verses are the dad talking about things going wrong for his family at Christmas. The presents they ordered were out of stock. They get in the car to drive to Grandpa's and the car breaks down in a blizzard.

They finally get to Grandpa's and his Christmas lights have burned down the house and he has to come live with them. All these inconveniences. But he's reminded that none of that is as "inconvenient" as the first Christmas. So we're going to play the last verse and the chorus for you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuQFFCl1h34>

(Fade in/start at 2:05. Fade out/stop at 3:04)

Listen to that again:

The most inconvenient Christmas ever was  
Was the first one, when God came so far to give himself to us  
So when the stress hits each December  
How it helps me to remember  
God is with us most when things just can't get worse  
The most inconvenient Christmas ever was, was the first

Are you KIDDING me? These guys are professing Christians and they churn out this theological cataclysm? When something is "inconvenient," that means it clashes with our previous plans, or it's difficult to get done, or it doesn't fit with our timetable, or we had to go out of our way to do it. And because of all that, it's an unpleasant task that we're reluctant to do.

Listen, sisters, NOTHING IS "INCONVENIENT" TO GOD. Nothing. He is the God who upholds the universe by the word of His power. He is omnipotent, omniscient, everlasting to everlasting, God Almighty, King of kings and Lord of lords who spoke all of Creation into existence.

Sending His only Son into the world to live a perfect life and die a horrible, agonizing, bloody death for your sin and for mine was not "inconvenient" for God. It was His plan from eternity past. And it wasn't difficult for Him. And He didn't do it begrudgingly or reluctantly. He did it because He loves you that much, and He rightfully loves His own glory even more.

I've been an Oak Ridge Boys fan since I was a kid, but this is one of the most offensive songs I've ever heard. It impugns the very nature and character of God. It's the Reckless Love of country Christmas music.

### *Amy gives input/banter*

**Michelle:** Amy, why don't you close us out with your least favorite Christmas song?

**Amy:** **Second Worst Okay, I am just going to play it. Here it is:** <https://youtu.be/t3lYO8Rq1DI> (intro, record scratch) Wait wait, not that one!

**Sorry, here it is:** Baby It's Cold Outside: <https://youtu.be/ZtoW4aV-Clc>

Baby it's cold outside has nothing to do with Christmas, and everything to do with seduction between two unmarried people who know it's wrong, but... Interesting background from Wikipedia: The song is a [call and response](#) duet between two people, a host (called "Wolf" in the score, usually performed by a male singer) and a guest (called "Mouse", usually performed by a female).

The portion I played was the reverse version, where Lady Gaga is trying to seduce actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt.

Some people think the lyrics imply date rape, at least through today's cultural lenses: She sings "Really I'd better scurry (He responds, "beautiful, please don't hurry)  
Her: "Well maybe just a half a drink more Him: put some records on while I pour)

Her: The neighbors might think Him: baby, it's bad out there)

Her: Say, what's in this drink? Him: No cabs to be had out there)

Her: I ought to say "No, no, no sir" Him: mind if I move in closer?)

Her: At least I'm gonna say that I tried Him: what's the sense of hurtin' my pride?)

Her: I really can't stay Him: baby, don't hold out)

And it goes on from there. I will have you know that I had to watch many different versions of this awful tune in the name of research, from Dean Martin to Rod Stewart and Dolly Parton, you are welcome. And now I need to go soak my brain in bleach.

**Michelle gives input/banter** You know, Amy, this song kills me, because, musically, I love it. It's got such a great antiphonal structure and a catchy melody, and if somebody would just have put some uplifting - or at least wholesome - lyrics to it, it would be one of my favorites.

But you're right - The man drugs or spikes her drink because he's trying to seduce - if not rape - her. That's not playful. That's not funny. Ladies, you just go ahead and take a minute to think about how you would feel in that situation - it's terrifying. And we shouldn't be laughing it off in a so-called Christmas song.

And I know it was written back in the 1940s, but that doesn't mean it was OK in the 1940s and we're too uptight about things now. It was wrong back then and it's wrong now, and saying so doesn't mean I'm a liberal, or a feminist, or someone who's jumped on the #MeToo bandwagon, all of which I've been accused of for denouncing this song. It means I'm a Christian. And we shouldn't be excusing or laughing at sin just because we feel nostalgic about a Christmas song.

Well, there you go - a few of our favorites and some of our not so favorites. Listeners, which Christmas songs do you love or hate? Let us know on our Facebook, X, or Instagram page.

**Amy:** Yes, we'd love to hear from you!

As we wrap things up for this episode of AWFS, we want to thank Amanda who became a new Patreon patron on Giving Tuesday last month, and our other recent donors, Mary and Ronda, who donated via PayPal. You are a blessing to us, and we appreciate you so much.

**Michelle:** Yes, big hugs and thank you's to those of you who have been so generous with your finances. If you'd like to help defray our podcasting expenses like these wonderful sisters, just go to AWFS.Life and click on the "support" tab.

And, while you're there, check out the "speaking" tab. If your church would like to host a women's event and you need speakers, Amy and I would love to come and share with your ladies. Or, we'd be honored if you'd recommend us to any solid churches, organizations, or conferences who might be looking for doctrinally sound women to teach and encourage other women.

**Amy:** And listeners, this is going to be our last new episode for 2023, so as we close out this episode and the year, we just want to say thank you. Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for your encouraging comments on social media and podcast platforms. Thank you for sharing our episodes with others. And thank you for your kind words when we meet you in person.

**Michelle:** We love serving you in Christ through A Word Fitly Spoken, and we love you, our listeners. We'll see you in 2024!

And until next time,

**BOTH:** Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and walk worthy!

**Bumper music outro?>>** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-OF7KGyDis>