

Chapter 15. Classical Music and Scripture: The Power of the Word

Classical music compositions are composed in segments. In the works without words, the music will portray human emotions. There are segments within segments. The longer segments are called, “movements”. The shorter segments are called “phrases”. These are like sentences. A certain feeling or image may be expressed in the music in the phrases or the movements. A movement could portray an event or a longer conversation. In these movements several phrases could represent separate thoughts, leading to a conclusion at the end of the movement. Classical music works usually have a specific beginning and a specific ending. The works may inspire one’s imagination to remember a certain event in one’s mind.

Handel composed “The Messiah”, a collection of compositions, written for vocal soloists, choir, and orchestra, combining those works with words from the Bible. “The Messiah” describes our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who He is and what was prophesied: His life, death, and resurrection.

With Scripture and Symphonies we may also enjoy the powerful words from the Bible with powerful music to accompany those words. As people who have read the Bible, gone to church, attended Bible studies, even gone to a seminary, or attended as a child a summertime Bible camp, we learn to memorize certain Scriptures. We repeat these verses very easily, and that is a good thing, but when we hear them with a little different rhythm, we could hear them anew. Music is able to reach deeply into our souls. It is written about many times in the Psalms and even in the Revelation of John. Even Moses led the Israelites in a song of deliverance. The music interludes in the symphonies with narrations from the Bible allow us to think things over.

Many years ago I was playing the Brahms Symphony No.2 with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra. At that event I was playing the viola. Viola music is not as difficult as the violin music, and so we have more time to think of other things while we are playing. The symphony that we were playing prompted me to think of the life of Jesus. At the end of the performance when I got home I took out my Bible and started organizing the verses about the life of Jesus to fit that music. That was my first experience in combining the Word with a symphony.

We are beset these days with many noises in the world. Music helps us listen to God’s Word. The words in the Bible are a collection of God’s loving letter to us, regarding what was, what is, and what is to come. If you need encouragement, read the Bible. If you need comfort and hope read the Bible. If you need Salvation, read the Bible. One cannot silence God when He wants to speak to us, but we can choose to not listen. The words of Jesus show us the way to follow him.

Music stirs our deepest feelings. Combined with the Word, we may hear a little more.

CONSIDER THESE: POWER OF THE WORD