

What The Christmas Card Doesn't Say

Luke 2:14

Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Pastor David Buffaloe
731-845-6104
online at bibleteacher.org



FOCAL Read Together Luke 2:14 **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.**

Every year about this time my wife and I begin to “do” our Christmas cards. We sit down and write sentiments in holiday cards with the intent of letting others know that we love them, while at the same time doing our best to focus on the Reason for this Season. Sherry and I want all who we love to focus on Jesus Christ, the One Who **gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:6)**. Jesus came to this earth “**not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many**” (Mark 10:45). Man, the sinner, needs the Savior. Jesus came to “**seek and to save that which was lost**” (Luke 19:10). What a glorious Savior we who believe have!

What does this have to do with Christmas cards? Quite simply, most of the cards that my wife and I sent out quoted the Bible, reading: “**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.**” Some of the cards had statements that were modifications of this text. Some said “**peace on earth, good will toward men**”. Others said “**glory to God**” or just “**peace on earth**”. None of the cards expressed the main reason why God should be glorified, or why there should be peace on earth and good will toward men. The cards focused on what we would like to see – glory to God, peace on earth, good will toward men – and yet never focused on He Who makes this possible.

It is so easy to lose focus. The angels who sang this song

could have lost focus. After all, when Jesus left the splendor of Heaven the Bible says:

Hebrews 2:16-17 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. {17} Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

The angels could have been envious of man, for Jesus left His place in glory to come down and be like us. The angels continued to sing to God, though when a third part of their race falls to sin, Jesus does not come to earth to die for them. The angels could have asked, as did the Psalmist:

Psalms 8:4-5 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? {5} For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.

Angels were created before man was created, yet God decides to save man. Angels are higher in creation than man is – we are a **little lower than the angels** – and yet Jesus Christ came to bring salvation to us. The angels could have lost their focus on their God, and yet they did not. As they looked down on this little manger their hearts burned with love. They who had sang in the greatest Throne Room of all now sang before shepherds **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”**, even though **“God spared not**

the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell” (2 Peter 2:4) These **“ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation”** (Hebrews 1:14) focused on a tiny Baby that lay in a manger and sang their hearts out. **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”**. They sang because God did a new thing, a prophetic thing, a wondrous thing. As the Prophet promised, God **“did a new thing. God made a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert”** (Isaiah 43:19).

This little manger, this forgotten place, holds the King of all Creation, Jesus Christ our Lord. As you come to this holiday season, dear friends, do not lose your focus. Christ did not come to give Himself for the angels. He came to give Himself for you. He left the splendor of Heaven to come to earth. He Who made all things was **“made flesh, and dwelt among us”** (John 1:14). He did this so that, **“whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”** (John 3:16). Jesus Christ is the Reason for this season, the center of the mark. See Him, focus on Him, believe in Him, and be saved!

1. Glory To God In The Highest Consider The Timelessness of God's Love

FOCAL Luke 2:14 **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.**

As the angels sang **“Glory to God in the highest”**, they sang with wonder in their voices. They were amazed at

that which God was doing. Man was a fallen race. God allowed man free will from his creation, from the very Garden of God. Man had absolute freedom to serve the Lord in a place where there was absolute and perfect peace. And yet man abused that free will – and we abuse it yet today. The most often question that I am asked is

How can a holy and loving God allow so much suffering in this evil old world?

Yet the truth is that God created us with the capacity for free will, just as He created the angels with a capacity for free will. Adam could have chosen to do the good, and to reject the evil. Yet **“by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin” (Romans 5:12)**. Adam, given the capacity for free will, chose to do the evil. He chose to follow Satan in disobedience, and chose to neglect the Will of His Creator. **Adam, created to rule and reign with God, chose to follow Satan rather than the Lord Who loved him. Adam took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of death.** The gift of God given him was abused, and God had every right to destroy Adam, this earth, and all. Yet God did not.

May I even tell you something more astounding?

God knew that Adam would sin. May I say that God is *never surprised*, never tricked, never fooled by our or Satan's foolishness. God knew that Adam would abuse the free will that was given him. You might say,

“But why didn't God make Adam in such a way that his free will would not follow the wrong, would not follow Satan?”

Dear friends, if God had made Adam *incapable* of wrong, then by definition he would have had no free will. Free will in and of itself implies an ability to choose the right or the wrong. Adam had absolute freedom of choice – and yet – and here is part of why the angels sang **“Glory to God in the highest”** GOD KNEW! The Bible says:

Ephesians 1:4 According as He {God the Father} hath chosen us in Him {God the Son} before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

God knew the choice Adam would make **before the foundation of the world**. God knew that man would abuse his free will, and choose to follow the Evil One. God knew that we who are of Adam's seed would be born in sin and in spiritual death. Our God, Who

Isaiah 46:10 ...declares the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done...

knew, and yet made the choice to make Adam anyway. **Dr. David Jeremiah** wrote¹:

“In the beginning there was God. And, being God, He

¹ In His book *Why The Nativity?*

created. The creations of God were magnificent. He made a universe of unbounded dimensions, measured out in stars and galaxies. But God wanted more than worlds, so He created life. He turned to His special world, the earth, and filled it with plants and animals, monstrous and microscopic - a kingdom of moving and breathing creatures, all fashioned in wild variety. But God wanted more than life. He wanted friendship, so He created man.”

Our God knew the condition that free will would bring to His planet, and yet He made us none the less. The Bible says that Jesus Christ is

Revelation 13:8 ... the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Before the first star was made, God knew. Before the Lord uttered the words “**Let there be light**” and **there was light (Genesis 1:3)**, God knew. God the Father knew that He would have to send His only Begotten Son. God the Son knew that He would have to come to this earth – leaving the splendor of Heaven – and take upon Himself the **likeness of sinful man**.

Suffering is terrible – but can you imagine how terrible *upcoming suffering must be*? If you knew that on such and such a day a terrible thing must happen to you, and that there was nothing you could do to avoid it, would not such knowledge make the upcoming suffering much more terrible? Oh Boundless Love, what a glorious love has God shed on us who are saved!

Jesus knew before the foundation of the world that He would have to die a terrible death for our sins.

We know this text:

1 Peter 1:18-19 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; {19} But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot ...

but do you know the following context, which reads:

1 Peter 1:20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Jesus' incarnation, His leaving of Heaven and humiliation on earth, was known before there was ever light in this universe. God knew **before the foundation of the world** that Adam would sin, that we would fall, and that He would have to die

Hebrews 9:26 For then must he {Jesus} often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Knowing what was coming, God so loved He nonetheless – with His free will – chose to form us in His image. Knowing what was coming He chose the nails for

us.

Jesus Christ chose the nails. He chose the beating, He chose the mocking, He chose the bruising, He chose the humiliation. Jesus Christ chose to hang on a Cross between two felons. He chose to pour out His soul unto death. He chose the sponge filled with bitter gall. He chose to bear your sin and mine, and to “make intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12). He chose to give Himself for you *before creation itself*. As the old African spiritual said,

“What wondrous love is this,
O my soul, Oh my soul!”

Jesus chose the nails. He chose them long before He walked and talked among mankind. He chose them long before He was a baby in a manger. He chose the nails from eternity past. Will you not choose Him?

2. Glory To God In The Highest: Salvation Is All Of God

FOCAL Luke 2:14 **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.**

God stooped from the height of glory to offer us salvation. The angels saw how far God stooped. These angels – present at creation, as

Job 38:7 **When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?**

sang to shepherds now as they witnessed this birth in a manger. Why do the angels sing? Why, this is a thing that prophesied – and has now come to pass. The Bible foretold:

Isaiah 7:14-15 **Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. {15} Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.**

What God had promised came to pass. The angel Gabriel had told Mary that she should bear a Son, saying:

Luke 1:31 **And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.**

Mary **would conceive in her womb**. No man would touch her. God would do something God-like. Man brought sin on the world by a misuse of his free will, and God would offer salvation to fallen man by a proper use of His Divine Will. The angel told Mary:

Luke 1:35 **... The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.**

God would become man by interacting with Mary. **That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God**. Mary, this Child would be Almighty

God in the flesh.

The Divine lips that decreed “**Let there be light**” now speak through human flesh.

Their eyes that looked on eternity now look through the eyes of Man. The hands that formed Adam from the dust of the ground now feel the dust and hay of a manger. The ears that heard the praises of the angels in glory now hear the sounds of sheep bleating and cattle lowing. The angels know that now the promise of God is fulfilled in Jesus, a prophecy made long ago that said:

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Here in this humble manger lay Almighty God, born of a virgin, God's solution to our sentence of death. The angels sang:

FOCAL Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

The angels sang of “**peace on earth**” because the Prince of Peace had arrived. The angels did not sing of peace in the Garden of Eden. There was peace there, it is sure, but that peace was soon voided. The Babe in the manger showed the angels to what lengths God would go to save His creation. There was no true possibility of peace on

earth *in any capacity* prior to the Coming of God in Christ.

Man was at war with God, and proved that warfare at every turn.

Abraham our father in faith, though the friend of God, could not rest in the promise and the peace of God. He turned to *Hagar*, seeking to satisfy the promise of God by works – and ended up bringing warfare on Israel from that day forth through Ishmael's seed, the *Arab nations*.

Israel the Nation, being led under the Kingship of God, could not rest in the promise and peace of God. They demanded that the Prophet Samuel “**give us a king to judge us**” (1 Samuel 8:6) so they could be like the other nations. Dethroning God they placed Saul on the throne, a man who led the people away from the Lord's blessing.

Man is at war with God, and with himself. Never satisfied, the lost person is always looking for peace in the false gods of this world.

Peace is not to be found there, but in the *imputed righteousness of Christ*. There can never be **peace on earth, good will toward men** if Christ is not in the center of that peace.

That Baby in the manger was wrapped in the white flag of peace. On the mountain God challenged the

conscience of man and showed us that we can never have peace with Him through the keeping of Law. Christ came to us in a lowly manger, and through the Body of His flesh **abolished the warfare between ourself and our conscience, and between ourself and God. He has, in Himself, made ..**

Ephesians 2:15-17 ... one new man, so making peace; {16} And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: {17} And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

If you have been saved, you are at peace with God. You are receivers of the New Covenant, a Covenant made with the precious Blood of Christ. We who are *born again by faith in Christ* are not like those under the old Levitical laws. God has written His Law in your hearts, O Christian, if you have believed in Him. You know the right from the wrong because

Just as God inhabited flesh to bring salvation to you, God now inhabits your hearts to give you His peace.

What does the Scripture say to the Christian? It says:

Hebrews 10:16-20 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; {17} And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. {18} Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. {19}

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, {20} By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

We are consecrated because of that Babe in the manger. We are forgiven because that Child became perfect Man, and bore our sins on Calvary's tree.

Adrian Rogers once said "I can't get too mad when someone says something bad about me. I'm just thankful he doesn't know anything else"

Go on, legalist, and work your way to Heaven through your toil and through the Law. I myself am quite content to stand with the angels and sing **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and good will toward men.**

We who know that we are firmly in the family of God can always, and with all confidence:

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

Glory be to God, salvation is all of God! I rest in that!

**3. Glory To God In The Highest
The Lord Is Coming Again**

FOCAL Luke 2:14 **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.**

There are pockets of peace on the world today, little pockets of peace in God's people. A pocket of peace is in my heart and, I think, in this local Church. Where Christ is, peace is. Jesus said:

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Where Jesus is, peace is. If you are saved, peace is in your heart. You who are Christians should be carrying that peace with you where ever you might go. The Church where Jesus reigns is at peace. But there are only pockets of peace on this earth. Yet we have hope for tomorrow, for Jesus promised that He is coming again.

God promised Jesus would come the first time, and He did. God promised that He would return and establish His Kingdom on this earth. If He did what He said He would do the first time, why would you believe that Jesus will not do it a second time?

There are brighter days ahead. For those of you who are saved, you will rule and reign with Him in a future Millennial Kingdom filled with peace.

We who are saved can never bring about a worldwide peace, but we can scatter the seed of peace – the Gospel of salvation – far beyond this place. Peace came to the earth when Mary bore the humanity of Christ. She allowed herself to be used of God, and we in turn are

blessed because of it.

This Christmas season, allow God to use you to bless others, as He used Mary to bless us all.

If you have friends or relative who are at war with the conscience and at war with God, share the simple Gospel to them. Tell them that Jesus Christ came

John 10:10 ... that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Tell them that Jesus left the splendor of Heaven to lay in a manger for us. Tell them that He chose the nails from eternity past, giving His life for all who will believe. Tell them that free will brought death on creation, but their free choice to believe in Jesus will bring them certain life. Tell them that salvation is all of God and for His glory – and that He did all of this for you and for me. Tell them while there is time to tell them.

The Lord is coming again. May many be found sheltering under the shadow of His glory alongside of us . As **Dr. R.G. Lee** once said:

“... in such faith - a reckless faith - Jesus takes the keenest delight. There is nothing that so pleases Him as the most daring and reckless and romantic faith. He is never so joyed as when we trust Him with a mad abandon.”

May God touch your hearts with His Word.