

## **Luke 2:13-14 The Angels' Christmas Song of Praise! Christmas Day Dec. 25, 2015**

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Grace & peace to you from God our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate today!

On this Christmas day we'll consider the message of praise from the angels in Luke 2:13-14.

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

These are Your words heavenly Father. Let us see Your loving plan in sending Your Son to save us. Amen.

Dear Believers, celebrating the birth of our Savior,

We read earlier how the shepherds were in the fields at night when one angel appeared with God's glory bright. The angel told of the Savior's birth in Bethlehem. At other times, when angels brought messages from God, they usually disappeared quickly. But this time, after the news of the Savior's birth, an army of angels filled the sky with praise that could not be contained. The host of angels, perhaps as many as 12 legions or 72,000 angels (Matthew 26:53) appeared in the sky to praise God for the great things He had done in sending His Son. Whether their words were in song or poetry doesn't matter. What does matter is that we understand their message to the shepherds that night. Today, let's listen to

### **The Angels' Christmas Song of Praise!**

**The first words of the angels were, "Glory to God in the highest."** (v.14) The angels wanted praise and honor to God to be in all of heaven. They had seen the fall of mankind into sin in the Garden of Eden. They saw the devastation that it brought to all people on earth. God had to call on them to help believers like Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, and Daniel and to protect many other believers from the power of evil. All people were born under the tyranny of the devil. To this day, people are in the darkness of sin which they cannot escape on their own. And the way of every sinner leads to death. (*Proverbs 14:12*) Most of the time people don't think about death. "It only happens to others", they say. But eventually, we will face the reality of death. We are only one breath away from dying. And after death, without God's intervention we would suffer in eternal judgment. (*Hebrews 9:27*)

The angels had no praise for sin or death. But, they sang to God's glory since He sent His Son as a human to overcome sin and death. Christ experienced the evil of this world and suffering inflicted by the devil. God no doubt assigned angels to watch over Jesus during His life (Matthew 4:11, Matthew 26:53), or surely the devil or wicked people like King Herod, would have killed him as a baby and He would not have been able to fulfill the law for us. (But, God fulfilled His plan of having Jesus take all the sins of the world on Himself and experience death so He could offer *the gift of eternal life*. (*Romans 6:23*))

It amazes me that angels were so filled with joy about the Savior's birth. He didn't come to save them. God send Jesus to save people. Yet, it brought the angels joy to see God's plan of salvation being accomplished. How much joy do we have, who have been saved by Jesus? Paul wrote, "*He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*" (*Colossians 1:13-14*) So we say, **Glory to God in the highest!**

**Second, the angels sang, "On earth peace to men."** "Men" means mankind or peace to all people. It is interesting an army of 1,000's of angels announced that there would be peace for people on earth. Yet, they would not be the ones to win that peace against Satan and his evil angels. God's angels cannot erase sins that people have committed in thought, word or action. They can't change sinners who are born as God's enemies so they become His friends. Angels can bring no peace to the wicked! (*Hebrews 1*)

But Christ came to re-establish peace between God and people. He was the peace offering that Isaiah described, *“The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”* (Isaiah 53:5) Paul wrote, *“God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Christ], and through him to reconcile to himself all things ... making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1:19-20)* When a war ends by one side defeating the other, peace is reestablished by the rules of the winning side. There are times when individual fighters didn't know that the war ended so they keep fighting. So it is spiritually, Christ has won the victory by giving His innocent life in death. God's anger has been turned aside by Christ's sacrifice. He no longer sees people as His enemies. Christ has given people a whole new world, which the shepherds saw for a moment! But, if people don't know this good news or refuse to believe it, Christ's victory will do them no good. They will remain as enemies of God forever in their unbelief.

We have listened to God's Word. We admit that we are sinners rebelling against Him. We deserve His just punishment. But, we plead for His mercy and seek the forgiveness of sins that Christ won on the cross. By faith in Him we have received His peace! He has restored our relationship with God. As Christians at peace with God, we are thankful and let the peace of God rule and guard our hearts. We can rest secure, that our loving God continues to have His guardian angels caring for us. On earth, peace from God is ours!

**The third part of their message is: God's goodwill is toward all people.** The New International Version leaves a question as to what the last part of the angels' song means. It reads, *“Peace to men on whom His favor rests.”* (v.14) So, on whom does His favor rest? Is God favorable only to a few people on earth, to the Jews or only to believers and does He hate the others? If only a few people have God's favor, then how could we tell unbelievers that Jesus died for them and that He is their Savior? If God is so exclusive with His favor, how do we know for sure that we are included?

No, God's goodwill or His grace is toward all people. He loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. (John 3:16) He wants all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. In Romans 3 Paul described that all people are classified as sinners and all are classified in Christ as redeemed. *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:23-24)* The message of the angel was not just meant for the shepherds or the people at Bethlehem. It was for all the people! (Luke 2:10) That is why God put this lesson in His Word so that all might read or hear it, believe that God has included them in Christ, and be saved from His eternal judgment.

How wonderful it is to know that you and I have the favor of God through Jesus Christ, who was born to be our Savior. When our lives are troubled with things that make us sad or fearful, we need the angel's message to remind us that God is not angry with us. In Christ, He loves us and cares for us as His own dear children. He allows problems in our lives to train us to live by faith. But, He never seeks to punish us in anger. God will work everything for the *“good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”* (Romans 8:28) And just as He had His angels watching over the humble Christ child, He will have them watching over us to keep us in all His ways. (Psalm 91:11)

So, along with the angels, let us be filled with joy this Christmas Day as we celebrate our Savior's birth. Let us sing with the angels praises to our loving God who has done such wonderful things for us! God has sent His Son to rescue us from our sins and from death. He deserves our praises for giving us peace through Jesus. We praise Him for His amazing grace that He would include condemned sinners like us to be His children and heirs of eternal life with Christ! Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will from God to us all! Amen.