

References:
(http://www.whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_I_Heard.the.Bells.html)
(<http://pgboy.hubpages.com/hub/The-story-behind-I-Heard-the-Bells-on-Christmas-Day>)



SCC Message by John Aldax, December 23, 2012

Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men

Luke 2:14

Luke 2:1 – 14 –¹ At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. ² (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. ⁴ And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. ⁵ He took with him Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

⁸ That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹ Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰ but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹ The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! ¹² And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

*¹³ Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in highest heaven, and **peace on earth** to those with whom God is pleased." (NLT)*

*John 3:16 & 17 – ¹⁶ God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world **not to judge** the world, **but to save** the world through him. (NLT)*

Hebrews 2:17 – For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might turn aside God's wrath, taking away the sins of the people.

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men!*

*And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men!*

*Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good will to men!*

*Then from each dark, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good will to men!*

*It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearthstones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good will to men!*

*And in despair I bowed my head;
“There is no peace on earth,” I said;
“For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!”*

*Then rang the bells more loud and deep:
“God is not dead, nor does He sleep;
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men.”*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*, December 25, 1864. Music by John Baptiste Calkin, 1872.

- April 12, 1861 – Civil War begins and officially ends on April 9, 1865 with Lee’s surrender to Grant at Appomattox Court House. However, the last shot is not fired until June 22, 1865.
- July 10, 1861 – Fanny Longfellow is fatally burned in an accident in their home.
- Christmas 1861 – “How inexpressibly sad are all holidays.”
- July 1862 – “I can make no record of these days. Better leave them wrapped in silence. Perhaps someday God will give me peace.”
- December 25, 1862 – “ ‘A merry Christmas’ say the children, but that is no more for me.”
- 1863 – Lt. Charles Longfellow is critically wounded and suffers permanent damage to his spine.
- Christmas Day, 1864 – Longfellow writes *Christmas Bells*
- Four months later the Civil War ends

*Revelation 21:1 – 5 –¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now **the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.** (God will “come down” again and dwell among us.) They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*
⁵ *He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for **these words are trustworthy and true.**”*

Romans 8:24-25 –²⁴ For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.