**Luke 2:1-14**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. **2** This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3** And all went to be registered, each to his own town. **4** And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, **5** to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. **6** And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. **8** And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. **10** And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **12** And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,
**14**  “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

**“War On Christmas?”**

 Grace, mercy and PEACE be unto you from the only-begotten Son of God and the ONE born of the Virgin Mary Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Savior. Amen. Christmas 2014 marks a special moment in history for us to consider. One hundred years ago in 1914 during the first year of World Word I. An odd arrangement took place, which can easily be passed over when “9 million combatants and 7 million civilians”[[1]](#footnote-1) died by the end of World War I. It seems there was a short truce at Christmas among some places along the 500 mile Western Front where German and British soldiers were fighting. A recent article entitled, “Christmas 1914: The day humanity beat war” praises such a hospitable spirit among men in the midst of so much darkness.[[2]](#footnote-2)

 However we as human beings might find ways to put down the sword for a time. One thing is for certain, the first Christmas was not about truce in this world. It was a full on attack by God in the midst of darkness. This was the kind of war the likes of which none has ever considered possible or would pay much attention. The fighting waged by God was not going to be in the ways of man, but what glorious lay in a manger. Only Mary and Joseph at first saw this spectacle of God’s grace given for all people. Christ shined forth in the armor of swaddling clothes. His coming was to step within our souls, so God dwells with us and we with Him. The war to end all wars is the gift God has sent to you in His Son.

1. This is a war waged with a child on the frontlines.
2. It goes against the most natural thing in life to do which is to protect children.
* Only cowards use children to fight their own battles.
* Only the cold hearted care nothing for those who cannot fight for themselves.
1. Yet, the child born of the Virgin Mary takes the lead in the darkness.
* Isaiah the prophet saw such a battle march declaring, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
* This child Jesus is a one-man army seeking to enter the aching hearts of His enemy.
1. This is a war waged with weapons of love to save.
2. Love cradled in the flesh as God is comfort for us.
* The Vengeance of Christ is to care with Words of light that shines in our darkness.
* Luther describes God’s weapon of love at Christmas, “Who is there whom this sight would not comfort? Now is overcome the power of sin, death, hell, conscience, and guilt, if you come to judge this gurgling Babe and believe that he is come, not to judge you, but to save you.” (Christmas Book 33)
1. Love that crawls to the depths of the cross.
* It is the other darkness that more than ignored the manger, but put Christ to death, left disciples crying in silence, and sealed the Lord of life in a tomb. But these defensive measures would fail.
* The world rages on making plenty of noise with wars without much peace, craving wealth without a cure, gratifying desires without love, always seeking without any time to rest. But it is a world invaded by the love of God. (Word and Sacrament)
1. This is a war waged with good news from heaven.
2. The battle cry is not hate speech, but angelic hosts that sing.
* They declare, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”
* Jesus brings peace on earth with forgiveness, but His sacrifice also made peace for us in heaven.
1. The birth of Christ means to celebrate His enduring salvation for all people.
* Humanity cannot beat war without Him who already fights for us. Jesus, “gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”
* Christ once came by night as a surprise and soon will come again in glory as the Lord of hosts triumphant with Love.

 The war to end all wars is the gift God has sent to you in His Son. Here is the miracle more than a peaceful truce for a day, but for your whole life. Are you lost, afraid, have no hope? Christ is for you, the light no darkness can overcome. Are you assaulted, betrayed, and alone? Christ comes to be the faithful Savior who cares. Are you happy, full, healthy, and even comfortable? Yes, Christ is born to show you the true treasure come down from heaven that remains forever. A king comes tonight destined to be crowned with thorns. There will be no peace for Him at the cross, but His peace will be for you. Joy to the world the Lord has come in the flesh to be our salvation. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World\_War\_I [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.columbian.com/news/2014/dec/20/christmas-1914-the-day-humanity-beat-war/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)