

Peace and God Will For All?



**The grace of God has appeared,
offering the gift of salvation to all**

Titus 2:11

Peace and God Will For All?

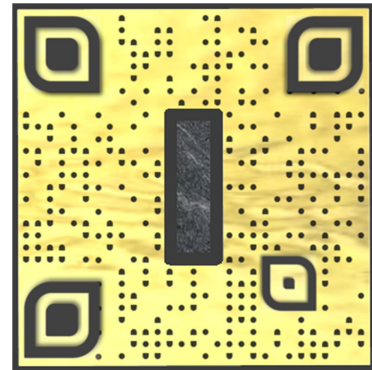
by Kevin Barr

from "A Collection of Short Letters"

found at <https://PeaceAndGodWill.com>



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cover: Built in 1192, the Torpo Stave Church is the
oldest building in the district of Hallingdal, Norway.
Search for "stave church" online to see many striking
examples of this kind of medieval architecture!

Peace and God Will For All?

"Peace and Goodwill To All!" What a great feeling to think about, especially around the holidays when people are drawn more closely to each other and maybe even try to consider the birth that inspired the expression. But what does it actually mean? In the Bible, Luke 2:10-14 describes the angels proclaiming joyful news to all people about the birth of Jesus with promises about peace and goodwill. The NEWS about the birth of the Savior is offered to all BUT the promises are only to those that understand His eventual sacrifice and believe in what it all means.

One difficulty with reading the Bible in modern English is that some words do not express the complete meaning of the word in the original language. For example, in Luke 2:14 the angels proclaim that peace is part of God's plan for having Jesus be physically born. The English word "peace" usually means an absence of strife or anxiety. But the word originally written in Greek was "eirene", from the root word "eiro", meaning a peace of mind from being "joined in wholeness". The people of that culture understood this concept as "shalom", which included a wholeness that comes from having a relationship with God. A person trying to live without God has an incomplete understanding of what a person should be and could not enjoy a true and lasting peace. Using shalom in a greeting was done as a blessing for the recipient's relationship with God. The word "peace" in this verse includes meaning that Jesus being born offers people that learn and accept who He is a chance for a complete relationship with God (John 16:33, John 14:27, Philipians 4:6-7).

Another issue is that the meaning of some words in English has changed over time so that the original language intent has been weakened or corrupted. For example, in the same verse the angels proclaim that good will or goodwill is part of God's plan for having Jesus be physically born. Mostly when people consider goodwill in English they are thinking in their own terms of being charitable or offering someone their best wishes. But the original language uses two words, good and will, that have specific meanings.

In English "good" commonly seems to be similar to nice or desirable ("This pie tastes good!" or "Sounds good to me!"), which is purely subjective to a person's wants. But it actually has the more objective meaning of "to unite or be associated with" or "suitable, a proper fit, well-suited, meet". It means deciding if something matches up well to some established standard, not defining the appropriateness of something by our own desires. When an authority figure tells a child to be good, the child knows that "good" means what other people have defined, not what the child wants. In the Bible the word describes the characteristics of God's ideas, not ours. God has the authority to define what is "good" for all of His creation. His definition is in the meaning of expressions like "Good morning/evening" and "Goodbye", which originated as variations of the blessing "God (and His ways) be with you" or "Godspeed" ("Go with God"). It is why the day of Jesus' crucifixion is called Good Friday (a gift from God that people who see the need for His sacrifice would want), and the idea of comparing Godly and ungodly things is called Good and Evil. Psalm 37:3 says to do the Lord's good to enjoy His faithfulness.

Consider the early chapters of the book of Genesis. God creates things and even SAYS they are "good" (using His word for "good"), but He tells Adam and Eve that eating the fruit of a specific tree is bad and leads to death. Eve (and then Adam, he is guilty too!) decides to use the serpent's suggestion of what is good, and THINKS to herself that the forbidden fruit is "good" (but somehow still uses God's word for "good" without any concerns!), so she eats it. Rejecting the objective standard of what is good that God defined for them so they could use their subjective personal preference for it harmed them and every other person born afterwards.

Most of the Old Testament teaches what happens to persons and groups of people that allow God to decide what is good for them compared to the people that decide that they can define what is good on their own. A person understanding life from this perspective knows the importance of a community's (which hopefully is also God's) values instead of always selfishly focusing on their own desires. If they say "This pie is good, but I don't like it", they mean the pie meets all the desirable characteristics that most people would expect of it.

The word "will" can mean "wish" as in someone's "last will" document, but it also means intention ("I will do that"), or a person's character that is causing their intentions ("Does he have the will to do that?").

There are two words in the original Greek that can translate into the English term "good will". The oldest hand-copied letters that became the book of Luke used "eudokias" which means "of good will", but a large number of later copies use "eudokia" which

means "good will to" (probably started from an error in making a copy that was then carried over to many copies). This means having to decide if Luke 2:14 is saying that Jesus being physically born offers peace and "goodwill to men" or peace "to men of good will". The second meaning is probably more accurate because those copies were closest to the original, God-breathed version. So the original two-word phrase "good will" in the book of Luke actually means Godly intentions or Godly character, not a person's idea of charity or mere thoughts of best wishes. Luke 2:14 is actually saying God's intention is to offer His complete peace (Rom 5:1, Phil 4:7, and other Spiritual fruits) to people with the kind of character He favors, people that want to learn how to have a relationship with Him (and enjoy "shalom" peace). This matches up well to everything that the Bible teaches about the NECESSITY of accepting Christ as a personal Savior, being cleaned and reborn with Him to gain His favor. "Goodwill" is NOT a gift or blessing for every person that thinks happy thoughts about people or Jesus the way greeting cards present the verse at Christmas!

P.S. (for more postscripts read the online version)

An interesting aside about how some people determine for themselves (without being led by the God of the Bible) what goodwill should mean is that one person may think it is providing useful charity to a needy person, similar to the good Samaritan in Luke chapter 10. Another person who is warm and well fed and sees a cold and hungry person may offer an empty blessing of best wishes with no actual help, like the man in James chapter 2. The first person performs works but without faith in God as the provider, and the second person has faith in an idea that help

should come but offers no actual works. The first person is doing something helpful but will only gain accolades from other people for it (no crowns in Heaven or even the chance of getting there!), and the second person is more contemptible, believing that he already sacrifices enough for society so his wealth should remain his, but it is important for somebody else to do something about it.

Also, a little more about the problems with deciding what is “good”: A golfer may decide it is good to enjoy the game so it is ok to repeat shots or move the ball to a better location. He may be able to force his beliefs on a few others with him (especially if they also enjoy the idea!), but a person thinking this way is focused on his sense of “self”, with little consideration of what his community (or God) has determined is the best way. He may feel like he has enjoyed a “good” day on the course, but eventually he will have conflict with others in the golfing community who have made a set of rules, an objective standard of what “good” golf is, so that the game is scored fairly for all. This is an example of what happens when people don’t want to fit into a community because they insist on living how they want and expect the community to accept them for it.

Some people think they have the authority to decide what is good for others. If a group of them gets large and aggressive enough, the objective standard of what the community previously decided is good can be overwhelmed. This can potentially lead to anarchy or a dominant sub group oppressing the group that wants to live by the established standard.

Thank You for reading this story from "A Collection of Short Letters",
found at PeaceAndGodWill.com

Here are some excerpts from other letters in that collection:

Reconcile Your Account!

A common use of the word 'reconcile' is when a person receives their monthly statement and corrects the mistakes they have made so they can defer to the bank's authority. In Christianity the word 'reconciled' is used to describe the relationship a person can have with their Creator, BUT people that insist on an 'equal partnership' with God can never be reconciled with Him, just like people who insist that their checkbook balance is the correct one will have conflict with their bank until their account is eventually closed.

So, What Is A "Lord" Anyway?

...He is Jehovah/Yahweh/LORD, a reference to the original declaration from God to Moses that He is the "I Am", meaning every thing in every way to every person at every time. Later it is made clear that Jesus is this same "I Am". The reverence due Him as the Creator of all people and things is much greater than most people will offer Him.

What Does "Believe" Mean In The Bible?

...Believing in something means living in it, abiding by it, staying true to it.
...like believing in what the Bible teaches about the sacrifice of Christ. In John 1:12-13 Jesus says that only believers can be a part of Him.

Freedom of Choice vs. Free Will to Choose

Free will is an attribute God gives to all people starting with Adam and Eve (even before the Fall). It includes mental tools like curiosity and imagination that we can use to help make decisions, and a conscience to help us determine proper and bad choices.

...If Jesus says "take my yoke and learn from me and I will give you rest" (Mat 11:29), He is saying something akin to IF you eat your broccoli THEN you can have some pie. FOC people ...assume that Jesus wants to give them pie, they don't even try to understand the broccoli part. FWTC people study the whole statement and realize that they are responsible for part of how to get the pie.

What Is The Bible?

The Bible is a collection of books and letters recording the history of persons and people of God, and others apart from God. It is a gift from our Creator that teaches us His ways of how to have a relationship with our own mind and body, with other Godly or ungodly people, and with God Himself. So the Bible is an owner's manual for how to be a person.

Consider the idea of a parent who knows they are going to die but has time to prepare a journal to give to their young child. At first the child sees it as just a souvenir to remember their lost parent. As they read it over time they learn that their parent is teaching them how to live a successful life. The child is bonding to the book as a representation of the parent they cannot see face to face, so they love the book and want to spend time with it. They don't try to find excuses to only see it but not read it. The value and love it represents isn't in the cover, it is in the contents. This is how followers of Christ should think of the Bible.

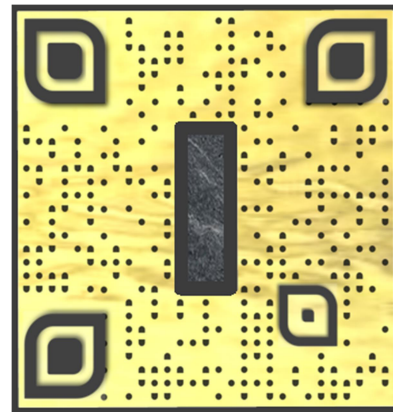
However a person cannot understand the Bible without God's help with interpreting it. Every person has a natural bias from their sin nature that causes them to want to see the interpretation that appeals to them instead of God's intention, and no person can always overcome that bias. Also the original revelations from God to the authors of the books (the "God Breathed" version) were recorded in their native language with all of it's word and phrase definitions and the cultural understanding of the times. All translations from the original, whether by a devoted individual or by careful consideration of a body of peers, are not inerrant and will have flaws for the following reasons:

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by **Kevin@PeaceAndGodWill.com**



Check out my guy
Kevin's great
Bible letters,
t-shirts, mugs & stuff-
he's the best! -Simba



<click or scan me!>

The grace of God has appeared,
offering the gift of salvation to all

Titus 2:11



Love Flows
Downhill



We love because God first loved us.

1/27/19

Pursue peace with everyone,
and holiness, for without it no
one will see the **LORD**
Heb 12:14



Let the peace of Christ rule
in your hearts, as members
of one body you were called
Col 3:15a

IT'S ALL
GOD 

I AM: the All-Knowing/Present/Powerful LORD

God said to Moses,
"I Am Who I Am. So
say... I AM has sent
me to you." Ex 3:14

Jesus said to them,
"I assure you:
Before Abraham
was, I AM." Jn 8:58

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I, the LORD, search the heart,
to give to each man according
to his ways. Jer 17:10 SO...

Examine yourselves to see if you
are in the faith; to know if Jesus
Christ is in you. 2Cor 13:5

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Justified by faith, we have peace with
God through our Lord Jesus Christ Rom 5:1

Those
who love
God's
law have
great
peace
Ps 119:165

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