

**“Songs of the Season –
I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”**

Luke 2:13-14

Pledge to the Holy Bible

**I pledge allegiance
to the Bible,
God's Holy Word,
and will make it a Lamp unto My Feet,
a Light unto My Path,
and Hide it's Words in My Heart,
that I may not Sin against God.**

Luke 2:13-14

**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, good will toward men.**

Fox News Headline

Ahmadinejad Reportedly Claims U.S. is Blocking Return of Mankind's Savior

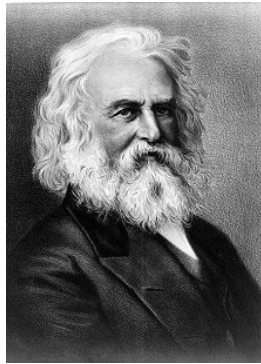
al-Mahdi is "the rightly-guided one" who, according to Islamic Hadiths (traditions), will come before the end of time to make the entire world Muslim. Over the last 1400 years numerous claimants to the mantle of the Mahdi have arisen in both Shi'i and Sunni circles. Modern belief in the coming of the Mahdi has manifested most famously in the 1979 al-Utaybi uprising of Saudi Arabia, and most recently in the ongoing Mahdist movements (some violent) in Iraq, as well as in the frequently-expressed public prayers of Iranian President Ahmadinejad bidding the Mahdi to return and, in the larger Sunni Islamic world, by claims that Usamah bin Ladin might be the Mahdi. This site will track such Mahdi-related movements, aspirations, propaganda and beliefs in both Sunni and Shi'i milieus, as well as other Muslim eschatological yearnings.

<http://www.mahdiwatch.org/>

According to these reliable, authentic, and universally accepted narrations, Mahdi will:

- Be from among the family of Prophet (SAW), among the descendants of Fatima (RA);
- Have a broad forehead and pointed nose;
- Appear in one night;
- Appear just before the day of judgment;
- Have same name as hazrat Muhammad (SAW);
- Escape from Madina to Makkah where people will pledge allegiance to him;
- Receive pledge and help of Iraqi people;
- Fight in battles;
- Rule over the Arabs for seven years according to Sunnah;
- Spread justice and equity on earth;
- Eradicate tyranny and oppression;
- Lead a prayer in Makkah which Jesus (pbuh) will follow in;
- NOT be the same individual as the Promised Messiah (Jesus).

<http://irshad.org/islam/prophecy/mahdi.htm>



One of America's best known poets, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), contributed to the wealth of carols sung each Christmas season, when he composed the words to "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" on December 25th 1864. The carol was originally a poem, "Christmas Bells," containing seven stanzas. Two stanzas were omitted, which contained references to the American Civil War, thus giving us the carol in its present form. The poem gave birth to the carol, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," and the remaining five stanzas were slightly rearranged in 1872 by John Baptiste Calkin (1827-1905), who also gave us the memorable tune. When Longfellow penned the words to his poem, America was still months away from Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9th 1865; and, his poem reflected the prior years of the war's despair, while ending with a confident hope of triumphant

As with any composition that touches the heart of the hearer, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" flowed from the experience of Longfellow-- involving the tragic death of his wife Fanny and the crippling injury of his son Charles from war wounds. Henry married Frances Appleton on July 13th 1843, and they settled down in the historic Craigie House overlooking the Charles River in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They were blessed with the birth of their first child, Charles, on June 9th 1844, and eventually, the Longfellow household numbered five children-- Charles, Ernest, Alice, Edith, and Allegra. "Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers" (Proverbs 17:6). Alice, the Longfellows' third child and first daughter, was delivered, while her mother was under the anesthetic influence of ether-- the first in North America.

Tragedy struck both the nation and the Longfellow family in 1861. Confederate Gen. Pierre G. T. Beauregard fired the opening salvos of the American Civil War on April 12th, and Fanny Longfellow was fatally burned in an accident in the library of Craigie House on July 10th. The day before the accident, Fanny Longfellow recorded in her journal: "We are all sighing for the good sea breeze instead of this stifling land one filled with dust. Poor Allegra is very droopy with heat, and Edie has to get her hair in a net to free her neck from the weight." After trimming some of seven year old Edith's beautiful curls, Fanny decided to preserve the clippings in sealing wax. Melting a bar of sealing wax with a candle, a few drops fell unnoticed upon her dress. The longed for sea breeze gusted through the window, igniting the light material of Fanny's dress--immediately wrapping her in flames. In her attempt to protect Edith and Allegra, she ran to Henry's study in the next room, where Henry frantically attempted to extinguish the flames with a nearby, but undersized throw rug. Failing to stop the fire with the rug, he tried to smother the flames by throwing his arms around Frances--severely burning his face, arms, and hands. Fanny Longfellow died the next morning. Too ill from his burns and grief, Henry did not attend her funeral. (Incidentally, the trademark full beard of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow arose from his inability to shave after this tragedy.)

The previous and following historical accounts were taken from:

http://www.whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_I.Heard.the.Bells.html

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

- **Memories of Christmas Peace (v. 1-3)**

VERSE ONE

"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!

VERSE TWO

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!

VERSE THREE

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!

1. Child's Perspective

Luke 18:15-17

15 And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when *his* disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them.

16 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

2. Not Ashamed...A Partaker

2 Timothy 1:7-9

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

3. Remember the Foundations

2 Timothy 3:14-15

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

- Memories of Christmas Peace (v. 1-3)
- Measurement of Certain Problem (v.4-6)

**Longfellow's Journal Entry
December 25, 1861**

- *The first Christmas after Fanny's death, Longfellow wrote,*
- "How inexpressibly sad are all holidays." A year after the incident, he wrote, "I can make no record of these days. Better leave them wrapped in silence. Perhaps someday God will give me peace."

**Longfellow's Journal Entry
December 25, 1862**

- "'A merry Christmas' say the children, but that is no more for me."

**Longfellow's Journal Entry
December 25, 1863**

- Almost a year later, Longfellow received word that his oldest son Charles, a lieutenant in the Army of the Potomac, had been severely wounded with a bullet passing under his shoulder blades and taking off one of the spinal processes. The Christmas of 1863 was silent in Longfellow's journal.

VERSE FOUR

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

VERSE FIVE

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

VERSE SIX

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!"

1. Perilous Times Shall Come

2 Timothy 3:1-5

- 1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
- 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
- 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
- 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;
- 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

- Memories of Christmas Peace (v. 1-3)
- Measurement of Certain Problem (v.4-6)
- Melody of Christ's Peace (v. 7)

**Longfellow's Journal Entry
December 25, 1864**

- Finally, on Christmas Day of 1864, he wrote the words of the poem, "Christmas Bells." The reelection of Abraham Lincoln or the possible end of the terrible war may have been the occasion for the poem. Lt. Charles Longfellow did not die that Christmas, but lived. So, contrary to popular belief, the occasion of writing that much loved Christmas carol was not due to Charles' death.

VERSE SEVEN

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"

1. The Best Christmas Gift

Isaiah 9:6-7

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, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.
