

My Eyes Have Seen Your Salvation

He had a promise.

The LORD had given him assurance – he would see the Messiah before his death.

Simeon lived with something more than hopeful expectation. He knew. As firm as the ground beneath his feet – he knew.

All his years of righteous devotion found their ultimate reward when he saw that face. That small, innocent face.

The Christ child. The light and revelation to the world. And so he proclaimed for all the hear:

“My eyes have seen your salvation.”

She was nothing.

She was lowly and humble, yet the LORD had chosen her among all women.

Mary had nothing to offer but her obedience and praise. When the Maker of the world became the fruit of her womb, she responded in the only manner that made sense:

“My soul magnifies the Lord.”

He was a prophecy.

His life had been ordained from beyond his birth. He was the voice crying out in the wilderness making straight the way of the Lord.

In the womb, John jumped for joy when his Lord drew near. In life, he proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom. When he saw his Savior approach, he gave witness of all that had been made known to him:

“Behold, the Lamb of God!”

What about us?

We are faced with unspeakable evil every day. We are confronted with injustice, pride, greed, and apathy. The world is broken, seemingly beyond repair.

But we have seen the Lamb of God. He has been revealed to us in our lowly state. The darkness of our lives has been transformed by the truth and love of the great Light of the world. Our broken ways have been made straight. Our souls magnify the Lord for we have seen with our eyes His salvation.

But it cannot end there.

We are now faced with the same truths and the same impetus at Simeon, Mary, and John. Now that we have seen salvation with our eyes, it is for us to share this good news of great joy to the world. Our sins have been washed by the blood of the Lamb of God, so it is for us to proclaim his coming. We have been visited by the Great I AM, so our souls magnify the Lord.

We, who have been given this greatest gift, are now the gift-givers. We carry the light to a world stumbling in the darkness. We cry out to the lost that the Lamb of God has come and salvation is here. We live lives of praise to the only one who is worthy. How can we do anything less? Our eyes have seen His salvation and our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!

Merry Christmas from Rambling Ever On!

Five Reasons “Away in a Manger” is the Worst Christmas Song Ever

I love Christmas music. I believe my unblemished record of staunch Christmas musicophilia on *Rambling Ever On* [says](#) it [all](#). Yet, not all Christmas music is created equal. For every transcendent *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, there is a painfully awful *Last Christmas*. For every majestic *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, there is the horrifyingly terrible *Christmas Shoes*. So, while I love Christmas music and celebrate it every year, I don't embrace every Christmas song out there. Case in point: *Away in a Manger*. As bad as the previously mentioned songs are, they aren't nearly as terrible as the manger song, due to its insidious nature. It poses as a beautiful, sacred song. It gets played on Christian radio. It gets sung to small children. It even has the audacity to get sung in church! I reject it. Yet its soul is as black as night. I reject all of it. Here are my five main reasons.

It is biologically fraudulent

Let's get the most obvious one out of the way. Jesus was fully God and fully man. Which means He was fully baby. If Jesus had been born and then placed in a manger, and did not cry at any point, as the song states, something would have been terribly wrong with Him. Babies cry. It's a good thing they cry. Doctors make sure they cry as soon as they are born to test

their lungs. Babies cry when they are hungry and thirsty. They cry when they need to be held. If Jesus did not cry then He was developmentally stunted. And we know that is not true. Which leads me to point number two.

It is emotionally manipulative

At its core, *Away in a Manger* is a lullaby. It seems to have been written for the express purpose of convincing children to go to sleep. So the wording used in the song is deliberately manipulative to that end. The thinking behind must have gone something like this – “Good little children want to be like the “little Lord Jesus”, right? Well, He didn’t cry so they shouldn’t either. And if they do cry, then they are not like Jesus at all.” That is almost unconscionable.

It is poorly written

I get really irritated with songs that change perspective. *Away in a Manger* is a big offender in this regard. It starts off third person for the first three stanzas but suddenly goes into first person on the three final and climactic stanzas. Why? Because the writer ran out of more drippy examples of insipid, idealized first-century life? Or because the writer wanted to really pour on the guilt trip for the listening children that were struggling to go to sleep like good little boys and girls? Or was it because the songwriter wanted to include some lame declaration of love to the “Lord Jesus.” I say lame, not because loving Jesus is lame, but because tacking it on at the end like that is sloppy, ham-fisted, and obsequious, not to Jesus, but to the listeners in an attempt to convince them that this is truly a good, Christian song.

And the line, “no crying He makes” is just bad poetry on every

level. Did Yoda get co-writing credit on this or something?

It is patronizingly ordinary

The incarnation of Christ is one of the most miraculous and amazing things to ever happen. It is good to sing songs about it. It is good to be brought to worship thinking about it. What *Away in a Manger* does is take that magnificent event and turn it into a sickly-sweet, mushy, touchy-feely mess. Shepherds, angels, and kings worshipped this child, and the best this song can do is celebrate his sleeping, his sweet little head, and that he didn't cry? O come let us adore Him indeed!

It is theologically bankrupt

I don't expect deep theological truths from every song. One of my all-time favorite Christmas songs, *O Holy Night* is not the most theologically impressive song out there. But it is poetic and beautiful and contains enough truth to make it worthwhile. *Away in a Manger* is none of those things and is most definitely not worthwhile. Beyond the silly stuff about Jesus not crying – which contradicts the rest of the Scriptural account of His earthly life – the final stanza is a hodgepodge of pseudo-religious sounding phrases mixed with shockingly modern day spiritual sentimentality. Let's unpack it, shall we?

First, Jesus is not “looking down from the sky” and if He were why would he look down from the sky “and stay by our cradles til morning is nigh”? I guess you could argue that the writer is trying to say that Jesus is everywhere, but if that is so, why start with the idea that Jesus is looking down from the sky?

Second, the penultimate stanza has the singer asking Jesus to be near them, or us. We don't have to beg Jesus to stay near us. He has promised to be with us in his Word. Many times, actually.

Third, when you further examine that stanza, you come upon an even worse question – “love me, I pray.” Once again, not necessary as it has already been promised. And to make this even more ridiculous, this song is about Jesus as a baby – His incarnation. What more proof did this writer need of Jesus' love than this act of complete sacrifice? “Look, I realize that you just gave up Heaven and your power, and you came to earth as a human baby, with all the awful stuff that entails, but do you think you can do something else to prove to me that you love me?”

Finally, the last stanza closes things out in spectacularly wrongheaded fashion. It starts off okay with a request for blessing for all the children that are in Jesus' care. I can get on board with that. It ends with a request for Jesus to take us all to Heaven to live with Him there. It doesn't work like that. Jesus doesn't just take everyone to heaven. That's where repentance and salvation come into play, but let's not get hung up on the very foundation of the Gospel or anything!

This Christmas, listen to as much music as you can. It is a profitable and worthy endeavor. Yet, for the sake of your soul, and the souls of those around you, avoid garbage songs like *Away in a Manger*. While there are probably more aesthetically offensive Christmas songs out there – I'm looking at you *Christmas Shoes* – there is no song that is as deviously evil as *Away in a Manger*. It cloaks itself in religious language and holy imagery, in a vain attempt to hide the utter darkness of its twisted and corrupt heart. Flee from it my friends. Flee for your lives.

5 Truths About the Diversity of the First Christmas

O Christmas, do you ever remind us that people think their way of talking, writing, and celebrating is *the* way. Christmas starts quarrels over minutia more than all of the rest of the holidays combined. From what phrases to say to when to listen to music, we ironically turn this allegedly peaceful time of the year designed to put our focus on the birth of the most significant person ever into a self-aggrandizing time of opinions and disagreements. I realize many of these things are not meant to be taken too seriously (I honestly do not care if you consider *Die Hard* a Christmas movie) but if we are honest, we know that we get disproportionately passionate in defending some traditions.

If we study the first Christmas, we find that it was quite diverse. And I have no doubt an application to this is that we really need to realize that diversity matters to God. Much of (and dare I say most of) our way of “doing” Christmas are not absolute truths to be followed and argued. And it may be that these silly differences of opinion about Christmas represent bigger and more serious issues we have with a lack of diversity in things things that do matter. Like worship and community life.

With that in mind, here are five things about the first Christmas and its diversity that can teach us to embrace the differences we have with others.

The worshippers were diverse

Mary was a young virgin. Joseph was a carpenter descended from King David. The Magi were astrologers and may have been kings. The first group of people commanded to go see Jesus were laity shepherds. Zechariah was a priest and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. Anna was a very elderly prophetess. Matthew, an author, was a Jewish tax collector. Luke was a Gentile doctor. The messengers from God to man about Jesus were angels and not even human. And I'd even include the animals as well, since their feeding trough is mentioned by name in the story.

The voices of Christmas are far more diverse than we are accustomed to in our lives. Perhaps Christmas should awaken us to this fact and motivate us to long to hear from a variety of sources on how to understand and serve Jesus. And it could be very edifying to worship with a diverse community and buck against the typical cultural model of a church filled with people as similar to me as possible.

The reactions were diverse

The Angels comforted Mary and the shepherds, both of whom were terrified. The shepherds told people about Jesus and glorified God. Mary pondered the events deeply and treasured them in her heart. The magi bowed down to worship and brought gifts. Anna, Zechariah and Simeon gave prophecies. Simeon held Jesus in his arms. John the Baptist leaped in his mother's womb. Elizabeth gave a glad cry.

How we react to the Christmas season may seem so important to us that we expect others to feel similarly. When in fact there are many ways to react to Christmas and if they do not have anything to do with gift-giving or Santa or even huge family gatherings, they can still be good. As long as they are legitimate reactions to who Jesus is.

The geography was diverse

Joseph and Mary traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. After his birth they went to Egypt for a while and then back to Nazareth where he was raised. The Magi were from "the East" and while it is impossible to say for sure where exactly that meant, it was a long distance from Galilee.

The lady who leads the prayer time at my church on Sunday mornings before Sunday school often brings requests from magazines that talk about places and people I have never heard of. I appreciate this instead of always just praying for our church, our neighborhood or our missionaries. God is indeed a God of the whole world and even Christmas reminds us of that.

The prophecies of Jesus as Savior were diverse

Jesus's name means "Jehovah is salvation" so centering the idea of Christmas around "Jesus is our Savior" is perfect. Yet even that phrase was broken down theologically that first Christmas. Consider just in Zechariah's song in Luke 1:67-80 that he teaches, among other things, that Jesus would be:

A Redeemer

This is a word that in and of itself has layers of meaning. A first century Jew who knew their Scriptures could think of Ruth, Job or even Levitical law and understand that Zechariah meant that God sent Jesus to rescue us from spiritual slavery and that in some way he was going to purchase us for God out of our pathetic circumstances. As a family-redeemer. This explains why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6 that "you were bought at a price" and in Acts 20 he claimed the church was "purchased by the blood Christ".

A Warrior King

The literal phrase Zechariah used was “horn of salvation” which is found in several places in his Scriptures to communicate victory over enemies and security and refuge. Combine this with the fact that Zechariah references David, the general king who led Israel to many war victories, some translations call Jesus “a mighty king” in this prophecy.

The Jesus of the Gospels did get angry and even violent (Mark 11) but he came to die and was a willing sacrifice who did not fight back against his human enemies. Yet to Zechariah’s audience, they knew that God was a Mighty Warrior King, as in Isaiah 42:13:

The Lord will go forth like a warrior,
He will arouse His zeal like a man of war.
He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry.
He will prevail against His enemies.

And then Revelation describes Jesus this way:

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His name is The Word of God. The armies which are in heaven were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

We know from the New Testament that our enemies are not other humans. They are Satan, sin and death. And that Christ came to conquer them all. I think the resurrected Jesus is very much an image of the Old Testament Triumphant Warrior God and also of King David the War General, not victorious over the Philistines or Assyrians but over evil forces of darkness and over physical and spiritual death. And I think Zechariah prophecies this. The doctrine of the first Christmas goes much

deeper than the incarnation and the image of baby Jesus.

Our covenant.

Zechariah referenced Abraham, which was the covenant he knew at the time, but we now know a covenant that is better and forever in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:15).

A light to all nations.

Darkness has a strong association with secrecy and wickedness and confusion. All of these things were true of most nations spiritually before Christ. But he came to bring knowledge of not mere morality but of salvation to God for everyone.

And there are more I could discuss. But what all of these phrases have in common is that they describe Jesus as Savior in terminology that demonstrates how profound, complex and marvelous that phrase is.

The object of worship was not diverse

And this is the most important thing of all. It is easy in our culture to bow down to diversity so far that we consider all beliefs and religions equal. And while I do not unnecessarily disrespect any belief or worldview, I without shame proclaim Jesus Christ as my Lord and God, the only means to get to God and the unique object of my worship. Christianity is exclusive by its nature because of Jesus, as any monolithic religion is and as all truth claims have to be in some sense. Christianity is significant not for how inclusive it is of all beliefs, but rather how distinct it is. It desires to be inclusive of all

people, notably all types of people and the New Testament reiterates this over and over. Yet the way to Heaven is narrow. Jesus is the only door.

No matter your traditions this Christmas, the original story is exhaustively about Jesus and his role in human history. It wasn't just a birth. It was a collision of God and humanity that changed everything that matters in eternity.

As always, we welcome feedback in the comment section below.

He Lies Laying

The v-like manger-cradle
balanced the babe in a bed
so cold but comfortable
 He lay

in the midst of the struggle
the manger-cradle king
with star-found worship
 He lay

when they saw heaven on earth
in the clouds greater than the sun
between the branches of David's line
 He lay.

Our winter stars shine in adorned
worship when heaven on earth
 lies laying

grace in the midst of our struggle, the

v-like manger-cradle
balances the babe
 lies laying

love in our cold but comfortable
battle worn defense of the fire
 He lies laying

joy when He lay laying
the venom's lies left
when we left our sins

and truly
the babe lies laying still.

The Lines of Our Joy

Undoubtedly, no amount of writing
describes the unmeasured happy, leaping joy,
the loudly whooping folks and toys,

the happy days,
the mellow ways
the lays, the lines
streaming the tree of time,

doting time,
times of dreams
and dreams in dreams.

I'll watch them laugh
all splayed with wishes and
ways of yuletide joy

in the measured time,

doting time,
dreams in tracks of time,

the happy days,
doting ways,
dipped in lays and lines
streaming the tree with times,

And no word or measure
defines our happy times and toys
nor the whistling tracks of our timeless joys.

Unpopular Opinion: Christmas Music

“I love Christmas music but I don’t want to hear it on the radio until December.”

“Christmas music before Thanksgiving should be against the law!”

“I hate Christmas, joy, peace, and every good thing all the time because I am a miserable, unhappy, grinchy Scrooge.”

I have heard variations of those statements every year for as long as I can remember. (I will concede the third one is probably just my loose interpretation when I hear people whining about Christmas music.) Each year around Thanksgiving, radio stations begin to play “all Christmas music all the time” and for some people, that is the worst thing ever. They rant and rave about it on social media. They write long Facebook posts about how awful it is to play Christmas music too soon. They bemoan. They complain. Then they pontificate

about how it cheapens the season or some such nonsense.

They are wrong.

In their twisted little world, they believe that it is only acceptable to celebrate the birth of the Savior of the world for about three and a half weeks in the month of December. Don't you dare celebrate the SALVATION OF HUMANITY for longer than that! Don't you dare sing songs to commemorate the incarnation – the coming of the Christ – until after Thanksgiving!

Is that really the world in which we want to live? Do we want to confine our celebration of this most sacred event to only one month of the year?[1. And if we are honest with ourselves, we don't even get the whole month of December because as soon as the 25th comes and goes, Christmas music disappears again.] Do we want to be the kind of people that would mock and ridicule others for wanting to enjoy this time of year for all that it signifies?

In the spirit of the season, I am willing to be gracious and concede a minor point to the haters and scoffers. If you are ranting about hearing songs like "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" or "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" then I'm with you. Those are flimsy, superficial things. They are the candy to the more spiritually robust songs main course. Mock those type of songs as much as you want – or at least, mock the too-soon playing of them as much as you want. They have a specific time of the year to be played and heard.

However, the same cannot be said about spiritually deep songs like "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" or "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." Those songs have eternal value far beyond one month of the year. Why is it okay for us to sing and listen to songs about Christ's death and resurrection any month of the year but we recoil when we hear a theologically rich song like "Joy to the World"?

Stop being joyless Scrooges. Instead, be joyful Ebenezers[1. We used to sing a song in Panama called “Ebenezer – which the chorus translates to “So far the LORD has helped us.” That is what I think of every time I see that name.] recognizing all the wonderful things God has done for you – which includes what He did on that first Christmas two thousand years ago. Don’t confine that celebration to a few weeks of the year. Let it spill over to every time of your life.

The Whisper of the Almighty

God became man. Jesus Christ, one part of the triune God of the universe, gave up His privileges and humbled Himself, to take on flesh. To become human.

Books have been written about this theological truth. Words and more words have proclaimed how the King of kings came to earth as a lowly infant. We do well to pay attention. The Incarnation is the very bedrock of the Christian faith. God, rejecting all that was His by right, condescended to us. In our absolute need, He stepped into brokenness, pain, and sin and He stood by our side, in our shoes, in our place. He let go of His divine standing and lovingly embraced humanity.

Think about that. God became man. There is no human parallel, no analogy that will do that justice. We do not possess the capacity to create a story or song that will allow us to fully explain the depth of sacrifice that the Incarnation truly is.

Yet even in our meager understanding, we have caught a glimpse

of the enormity of it all. The unimaginable humbling of the Son of God. Though we are unable to appreciate the totality of that great act, we know enough to realize what it means for us. Without God becoming man, we have no path back to God. The way is shut. We cannot enter. Christianity declares the truth of this. Our faith is built on it.

Sadly, it seems we frequently miss a key part of the Incarnation. Yes, we fully believe that God became man. We unreservedly accept that He gave up His throne to come to earth as a baby. Yet do we stop to think about why He had to come the way He did? Why was He born in such a lowly manner? Our theology is clear on this. He came as a servant. He came in humility to show humanity a better way. He came as the Messiah for all, not just for the rich and powerful.

I believe it is more than that though. I believe that the manger, the animals, and the lack of worldly acknowledgment, is God's gentle whisper that the path back to Him is one of humility and condescension.

In the Old Testament story found in 1 Kings 19, God speaks to His prophet Elijah in a most unexpected way: a gentle whisper. God had previously sent a whirlwind, an earthquake, and a fire, but His voice was in none of those. He did not use the loud and impressive. Instead, He chose as intimate form of communication possible. He whispered.

God is capable of blowing us away with His words. He can speak as loudly as needed, as the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, and the stopping of the sun's movement clearly demonstrate. Yet he chose to whisper to us when He sent His Son. Yes, he sent His angels to announce the birth. Who did they announce the birth to? Shepherds. Lonely and solitary and insignificant shepherds. The very Son of God was born on earth as a baby and it was a gentle and intimate whisper.

We miss so much if we miss this. The incarnation was not loud,

showy or impressive because the way to God is not loud, showy or impressive. The way to God is only possible when we accept the sacrifice made on our behalf in humility and a stripping off of our pride. It is not enough to accept that Jesus is God and that He gave His life to save us. We must accept that we are wholly undeserving of that sacrifice and that without it, we are forever lost. Without it, the path back to God is shut. The only way to God is on our knees, surrounded by shepherds, animals, and hay, praising the baby who is God become man. Worshiping the gentle whisper of the Almighty who is lying in a manger, who is the Savior of the world. This Christmas, let us do our best to listen carefully for that gentle whisper. It is the whisper of our salvation.

Merry Christmas from Rambling Ever On!

Five Reasons “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” is the Worst Christmas Movie Ever

I cannot begin to imagine what was going through the minds of the writer, director, and studio back in 1964 when they created this monstrosity. By the way, I’m working on the assumption that everyone reading this has seen the stop motion movie. After all, it’s considered a classic. Television networks show it multiple times each year around the holidays. Everyone is familiar with Rudolph, Hermey, Yukon Cornelius and the rest of the heartwarming and uplifting cast of characters that populate the film. The problem is, there is nothing heartwarming or uplifting about the film. In fact, it is the complete opposite. It is ugly, mean, small-souled stuff that

should only be watched to learn how not to behave and live. Here are five of the virtually innumerable reasons that *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* is just the worst.

1. The stop motion is awful.

Stop motion can be a beautiful and mesmerizing film technique. Just see films like *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Coraline*, or *The Fantastic Mr. Fox* for examples of stop motion done right. *Rudolph* is ugly. It's twitchy. It's cheap and lazy. I'm sure this reason alone is not enough to persuade those that are still clinging to a nostalgic view of the film. You think you love it because it's always been there. It feels safe and Christmasy to you. Trust me, its lack of artistic creativity is only the tip of the iceberg. Its failures are many and will be dealt with in turn.

2. Santa Claus is a complete jerk.

There is no way to get around this. He reacts like a giant buffoon when he first meets baby Rudolph. Santa sees the big red nose and freaks out. He rejects Rudolph outright and shames the entire Donner family. But that's not the worst of it. He also treats the elves like garbage. They work hard to please him and even write and sing a song just for him. And how does he respond? He is bored and dismissive. He says it still needs work. He is condescending to Mrs. Claus—who frankly, is a complete saint for putting up with him. And the ultimate expression of his self-centered pigheadedness comes at the point of the film that is supposed to be the emotional and thematic climax—the moment he fully accepts Rudolph for what he is. But that's not what happens. The only reason he accepts Rudolph is because Rudolph's glowing nose can help him. It's a completely utilitarian view of Rudolph and I

reject it in the most passionate manner I can.

This is not my Santa. This is not a Santa to be admired or respected. He is a fool and should be left to his folly.

3. The adult males in the film are mean, condescending bigots.

I've dealt with Santa but he is not alone in this. Donner is a tool. He is ashamed of his son. He is embarrassed that his son is different. He treats his wife—aptly named “Mrs. Donner” because the filmmakers think women are weak and less-than—with virtually no regard. He doesn't listen to anyone, except the worst people you could listen to: Santa and Comet. And don't get me started on Comet. He is the trainer and coach for the young bucks and he might be the worst of the whole bunch. He is the reason Rudolph cannot play any reindeer games. My only hope is that when Rudolph becomes the lead reindeer to pull Santa's sleigh, he bans Comet to barn cleanup duty. And I hope the Abominable Snowman lives in the barn and has digestive issues.

Nearly every adult male is sexist, bigoted, and abusive. They are horrible examples for our children, which is exactly what the filmmakers wanted because they were probably communist.

There are two exceptions to this and I will deal with them next.

4. Too many drugs.

Bear with me on this one. Yukon Cornelius is pretty great but makes absolutely no sense. He is psychotic – as is evidenced by his tackling the Abominable Snowman off the side of a cliff. He talks and acts as if he is on drugs. The constant yelling, gyrating, sniffing, and licking of his pickaxe

indicate a troubled and unstable mind. But he's not the only one on drugs...

I can think of no other explanation for King Moonracer. It had to be drugs, right? It's a Christmas movie about a reindeer. There is snow, Santa, elves, snowmen, and a FLYING LION? And this flying lion is a king and he runs the Island of Misfit Toys. He "cares" for them until they can find a new home. Except he has no plan to find them new homes. He gets absurdly lucky that Rudolph and company show up and end up telling Santa about the island. And how does he care for them? They all live outside in the snow and cold while benevolent King Moonracer lives in a giant, warm castle. He sits on his comfortable throne, in his comfortable throne room, in the comfortable castle while his subjects sleep outside in the frigid winter air.

So we have another adult male that is just terrible. And makes absolutely no sense. How did the writer even pitch this idea to the studio? Answer: Copious amounts of drugs for all involved.

5. Our heroes, Rudolph and Hermey, are whiny little brats.

I get it. They are bullied by friends and family alike. But do they have to be so whiny about it. I mean for crying out loud, buck up boys! Rudolph had the love of his mother and the prettiest doe in the North Pole – Clarice. He also was already a pretty good flyer. He didn't need to apologize for anything. If the other bucks didn't want to play with him, fine. He would just fly circles around them while blinding them with his red nose. They would come around eventually when they saw how useful that thing was.

And Hermey didn't need to run away. What good was that going to do? How was he going to become a dentist in the middle of

nowhere. No. He should have stayed in the North Pole and set up his own dental practice. I'm sure the elves needed a dentist. It would have been difficult at first, but they would have come around as soon as they realized how much he could help them. And based on the typical elf diet of candy, candy canes, candy corn and syrup, they were going to need him desperately.

Like I said. These are only a few of the reasons this Christmas film is awful. Perhaps you disagree. Fine. Let me know why this a good Christmas film in the comment section below.

The Tree

Green tree, bright green tree,
dancing joy,
joyous seed,
resting on a lush, green sea.

The bells and bows,
the matchless lights,
shift like lightning,
sing like snow.

Tinsel twirls, bright green tree,
the dancing joy,
the joyous light,
twist and sing on the lush green sea.

Bright green tree,
we watch and wait,
watch and wow,
watch and bow,
waiting, watching the lush green sea.

The angel lauds,
glimmers,
shimmers,
simmers,
applauds and then

a pause.

Titans Tuesday: Dear Santa

Dear Santa,

It's been a pretty good year. I really don't have anything to complain about. Things are good. But, I believe with a little help from you, things could be even better. Perhaps even great. So, here is my Christmas wish list:

– It would be so great if the Tennessee Titans made the playoffs this year. It's been way too long since this fan-base has seen their team in the postseason. Eight years, to be more specific. And that playoff appearance is especially painful to remember because the Titans lost to the stupid Baltimore Ravens...again. Man I hate the Ravens! Sorry! I'll try to control my emotions. It's just that the Ravens are so dumb. They are just the worst team ever. Anyway...back to the Titans. For the first time in years, Nashville has a team to be proud of. A team that plays hard every single week. That is so cool. And has been so absent for so long. The Titans are 7-6. They

have three games left, so if you could do anything that would help them win these final three games, that would be awesome! Not sure what that is, but you are Santa and you have powers of some sort so clearly you should be able to use those powers to help out the team.

– Speaking of the Titans, could you somehow inform the media that the Titans are not a punching bag/laughing stock any more? They just beat the defending Super Bowl champion Denver Broncos and all any of them want to talk about is Harry Douglas' legal but kinda dirty block on Chris Harris Jr. It would be cool to see the national media actually say some good stuff about my favorite team. It's not a big deal though. If they keep winning, eventually, the media will be forced to talk about them. Oh, and speaking of dirty blocks and overreactions – could you make sure Aqib Talib is on your naughty list this year? That dude is crazy. And dangerous. And a 100% hypocrite if he is complaining about anyone else being dirty. He flat out poked Dwayne Allen in the eye last season. He tried to blind another player and he is crying about a legal block to the knee? Not to mention he then threatened to physically beat up Douglas when they see each other over the summer. Umm...is the NFL okay with their players threatening other players off the field? Wait, did I just ask if Goodell and the NFL have any clue what they are doing? My bad! They will probably invite Talib to speak to the rookies this offseason about sportsmanship and being a good citizen.

– Speaking of Goodell—could you make sure he gets fired this year?

– I'm going to see [Rogue One: A Star Wars Story](#) this weekend with my boys. I hope it's good. At this point, you have no control over the quality of the film, but since you are Santa, maybe you have more power in this regard than even I imagine. Could you make sure it's good? We are all very excited about it.

– Back to the Titans...Could you explain to the local radio sports talkers that the Titans completely control their own destiny now? I keep hearing them talk about all these crazy scenarios to get the Titans in the playoffs. Wild card scenarios. Winning the division scenarios. Houston losing here, Indy losing there. None of that matters. If the Titans win out they are in. Period. Those are the facts. I realize that expecting the Titans to win out is a bit unrealistic, but at least acknowledge it when discussing the playoffs.

– Could you make sure it snows when we are not traveling this Christmas season? I hate driving in bad weather. If this is outside of your purview, could you please put in a good word for me?

– Could you fix the Titans' special teams unit? Too much? Okay, I'll move on to something else.

Okay. I think that's about it for now. These are all the little, less important things on my list this year. I'm taking the big stuff over your head. Stuff like peace on earth, goodwill towards men. You know, the stuff that really matters. But, I think you are just the guy for the stuff on the list above. It's in your wheelhouse. So, here's hoping you can help out a little this year.

Merry Christmas, Santa.