

**Isaiah 52:7-10**

December 25, 2010 – CHRISTMAS MORNING

**Beautiful Christmas Feet**‡ **Racing on the mountains (v.7)**‡ **Bursting with joy (vv.8-9)**‡ **Seeing God's salvation (v.10)**

In the name of Jesus, our newborn Savior, dearly redeemed children of the heavenly Father:

Do you have beautiful feet? Most of us cover them in winter. I never understood my aunts comparing noses, ears, eyes and feet of all the cousins to see who had whose whatever. Personally, I always thought mine were mine. But I was corrected on that score many times. And God must correct us on this about the feet He sends our way. Whoever first told us, whether it was our Grandpa on a visit, or sitting on Grandma's lap, or Mom and Dad telling us the story, whoever first told us how Jesus was born to be our Savior – they had **Beautiful Christmas Feet**. Whether educators would want to analyze this as metaphor or metonymy, you get the picture. And when God is finished filling us with His grace today, you'll be glad as I am that Isaiah 52:7-10 is the appointed First Lesson from the Old Testament for CHRISTMAS DAY – Series A, B and C. Look at those **Beautiful Christmas Feet...**

‡ **Racing on the mountains (v.7)**

In the days before cell phones and texting, any news had to be carried in person by a messenger. Imagine you were living in Jerusalem during the time of Isaiah. News had reached the city that the Assyrian armies had captured the Northern Kingdom of Israel and were knocking off one city after another in the Southern Kingdom too. Stories of Assyrian atrocities made your blood curdle in your veins. They would attack a city and demand immediate surrender. Even those who did were treated cruelly, but if your leaders said, "No!" it was even worse for you. Assyrians would rip open pregnant women. They often impaled officials on trees shaved of their branches and sharpened to a spear point. They cut off the heads of officials and piled them on both sides of the city gate. Anyone entering would have to pass that grizzly proof that the Assyrians were cruel.

But your good King Hezekiah said, "No!" to the messengers of the Assyrian king. Hezekiah told you and the rest of Jerusalem, "Trust in the LORD. We will serve Him. He will deliver us." Wisely Hezekiah's engineers dug a tunnel to divert the Gihon spring inside the city walls. You would have water; attacking armies would not. But food stores were down and good news was scarce. When Assyrian messengers called in the Hebrew language from outside the walls, everyone heard what their evil king was planning. But still good King Hezekiah held out hope of God's deliverance.

Then one day a watchman high on the city walls cried out, "Look! I see a messenger." You rushed to the ramparts and sure enough. There he is **Racing on the mountains** that surround Jerusalem. You try to tell from the way he runs whether he carries good news or more bad. King Hezekiah comes up too to watch and wait. The runner reaches the city and pauses outside to catch his breath. But his smile speaks volumes. "Good news, O King. The Assyrian army has left. Last night the Angel of the LORD broke into their camp and killed 185,000 troops. Their king is disgraced and gone."

Can you see the **Beautiful Christmas Feet – Racing on the mountains**? No king was ever as cruel as Satan with his lies. He makes money sparkle until you find out how it has no power to even guard itself. Relationships seem so important until your relationship with God slips. Human power dies with weapons and armies. Health flees like birds before a storm. But when Christ comes at Christmas to deliver us: *"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"*

## † Bursting with joy (vv.8-9)

*“Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.”*

Can you hear them shouting on the ramparts? When they realize the message he brings, they shout for joy together. Literally it says, “They will see eye to eye when the LORD of Zion returns.” It’s unthinkable one messenger would say, “We’re lost!” while another says, “We’re saved!” When messengers recognize the enemies as sin, death and hell, when they see Jesus as the Savior, then they do “see eye to eye.” They’re “on the same page,” **Bursting with joy**.

Almost ten years ago, I received a message that my Granddad was very sick and in a hospital near Phoenix. I wished I could go see him. Can you imagine when a pastor friend of mine called? “Say, Mark. I went to the hospital to visit one of my members. The man in the next bed kept listening intently. Turns out it was your Granddad.” “Eye-to-eye” my messenger friend said the same thing I would. The message stood out all the more when spoken by a non-grandson. My heart was **Bursting with joy**.

Yours will too, maybe not so much when the family is healthy, gathered all around you. But when your life is in ruins, especially if it’s something you did or said, that’s when Satan’s armies surround your heart with fiery arrows. He fires accusations right and left to burn your soul and ruin your life in remorse. He wants you like Judas in despair, not like Peter in repentance. But don’t raise the white flag. Don’t capitulate to the decapitators. Wait on the LORD like good King Hezekiah watching from the ramparts. Christmas is coming. **Beautiful Christmas Feet** will have you **Bursting with joy** when you realize once more who this Jesus is. Then from the darkness of despair you will lift up your eyes again...

## † Seeing God’s salvation (v.10)

Is there a place in all the world that hasn’t heard of Christmas? Not the Americanized, fast food version. I mean the real Christ of this holy mass when we celebrate the nativity of our Lord. This is stated as fact: *“The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.”* Isn’t Isaiah’s message (700 B.C.) the same as the Psalmist (1000 B.C.)? Our Christmas Day Psalm 98:1-3, says: *“Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”*

Deliverance by the Lord God Almighty echoed throughout the world in ancient legends from other cultures. The Mayans, Incas and Aztecs in America recorded stories of a great deliverer. They heard, but then corrupted God’s truth into their own stories. Yet the facts were carefully recorded in God’s Word and closely guarded by ancient Jewish scribes. They were so strict that if you made one mistake hand copying, your whole scroll was destroyed. Months of writing could be burned up.

Nations around the world heard what the LORD did to Sennacherib and his army, how the Assyrian king went home in disgrace, then was murdered by two of his sons in the temple of his god. Right there in his pagan temple, his idol had no power. Neither did Pharaoh’s gods in 1500 B.C., when he had Moses and the Israelites trapped against the Red Sea. God parted the waters. Israel crossed on dry ground. Pharaoh and his army drowned trying to follow. No end of story. That was the great deliverance, which in Hebrew is *Yeshua* (יְשׁוּעָה). God gave Deliverance a body. He gave Him a Name. יְשׁוּעָה is Jesus, born this Christmas Day to be our Savior. Look in the manger. You are **Seeing God’s salvation** come to redeem us and bring us back to God. Look with the shepherds. Then go and tell, and you will have **Beautiful Christmas Feet**. It’s all in the Christmas message of יְשׁוּעָה. And with God’s people of old, we repeat the most ancient Hebrew word everyone knows: **Amen!**