

## How Beautiful the Christ of Christmas !

- ☆ beautiful feet (v.7)
- ☆ beautiful voices (v.8)
- ☆ beautiful arm (vv.9-10)

Unto us a Child is born! Unto us a Son is given! Dearly redeemed people of God:

When the world has had enough of Christmas, Christians push back. Not with the weapons of this world which can only keep the wicked at bay by killing enemies and breaking things. *“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”* (2 Corinthians 10:4f NIV84) The *weapons of the Spirit* are Word and sacrament. These crumble stubborn human pride and give life and health to all who will bend the knee before the Son of God. Soldiers laid down their weapons. Kings and queens their crowns as the Christmas Gospel of the birth of our Lord Christ was read. Queen Elizabeth of England hoped she’d be alive when Christ returns on Judgment Day because she wanted to lay her crown before Him. Good King Wenceslas carried firewood and gifts to his poor people in Bohemia. And Good King Hezekiah listened to the Word of the LORD from Isaiah the prophet. They all saw **beautiful feet**, and heard **beautiful voices**. They felt the power of God’s **beautiful arm** because they worshiped the Christ Child before and between His first and second coming. **How Beautiful the Christ of Christmas!**

### ☆ beautiful feet (v.7)

It was a sad time in Jewish history when the Holy Spirit inspired the joyful words of our text through Isaiah the prophet. The cruel and arrogant Assyrians had overrun one nation after another storming out of where Iran and Iraq are today. They had destroyed the Ten Northern Tribes of Israel and their capital in Samaria. Only little Judah and Benjamin were left in the Southern Kingdom. Archaeologists have found evidence of burned out destruction in practically all the fortified cities of the time. Ruined harvests killed many by famine. Disease and the sword claimed many others. Evil King Sennacharib carried off the Ten Northern Tribes. They were lost to history. They never repented.

How could little Judah survive? What kept the spirit of the people alive to dig Hezekiah’s famous tunnel still a favorite tourist site in Jerusalem today? How could they not give in to such cruel enemies?

The only explanation is the Word of God, sent through Isaiah that supported and empowered Hezekiah and his people. God’s Word is more powerful than battering rams and iron-tipped military technology of that day. God was especially upset that *“all day long my name is constantly blasphemed. Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I.”* (Isaiah 52:1–6 NIV84) Hezekiah spread the letter of Sennacharib on the altar in the temple. The LORD’s zeal promised food and victory. *“I will defend this city and save it....That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!”* (2 Kings 19:35 NIV84)

Good news came by runner. *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!”* Do you have **beautiful feet** today? *“For to us a child is born....He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”* (9:6–7 NIV84)

## ☆ beautiful voices (v.8)

*“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.”* Literally, the original Hebrew says, “They will see *eye to eye*.” What joy it brings when I hear fellow *watchmen* of my Lord Jesus proclaiming His dear Name, God’s Word in all its truth and purity. I read the comments of Pastor Gawrisch in our Christmas Day worship folder and my heart swells with joy because Jesus is my Savior too. To see his family with Harpers and Kannases raising skillful hands in music to help us lift our **voices** in praise is awesome. But what makes our **voices beautiful** is the Name of Jesus on our lips. *“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!”* (Psalm 133:1 NIV)

Not so long ago it was considered a sin to sing anything but the words of Psalms in worship. A man named Isaac Watts believed that too, but he did not believe what the state Church of England taught and so was thrown in prison for treason along with other British Nonconformists. His wife Sarah was expecting. The stress caused her to give birth prematurely to a little baby boy, weak and stunted from birth. They named him Isaac after his father who was finally released and returned home to the family.

Little Isaac Watts really irritated his strict father. Once during family devotions he started snickering. Isaac senior demanded to know why. Young Isaac had seen a mouse run up a bell rope. So he answered his father, “There was a mouse for want of stairs / Ran up a rope to say his prayers.” His father reached for the rod of correction while his boy fell to his knees begging, “Oh father, father, pity take / And I no more verses make.” Years later when young Isaac complained to his father about their boring hymns, his father demanded, “If you think you can do better, write your own.” Over 600 hymns followed. We’ll close our service today with one of the most famous of Isaac Watts’ hymns: “Joy to the World.”<sup>1</sup> Can your **beautiful voices** be heard beyond this sanctuary for friends to see God’s...?

## ☆ beautiful arm (v.9-10)

How can we help it? The LORD says, *“Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. 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.”*

Sometimes it’s hard to see the Lord’s **beautiful arm**. For a Jewish Christian minister named Richard Wurmbrand it was all but impossible. He was jailed in by the Nazis when Germany conquered Romania during WWII. But when the Soviet Union took it back, the Communists put Wurmbrand back in prison. He dared to proclaim the **beautiful arm** of the Lord in Jesus Christ the Savior of all. After years of suffering Wurmbrand was ransomed for \$10,000. He and his wife Sabina finally emigrated to America. Some US Congressmen complained when he testified before Congress because Pastor Wurmbrand only wanted to talk about Jesus Christ. In one of his eighteen books, *Tortured for Christ*, he told how the **beautiful arm** of the Lord was seen in prison. Fellow prisoners tithed their food like one tiny green / brown pea out of ten for a sick prisoner. They blessed the guards who beat them. Some guards repented and joined the Christians as fellow prisoners. Wurmbrand was convinced that the kindness of Jesus Christ destroyed the Soviet Union from the inside out.

What but the **beautiful arm** of God could aim His fiery zeal against our worst enemies: sin, death and hell? That tiny Babe, the Son of Mary, is also the Son of God. His blood alone is holy. His body alone could obey God’s law perfectly in our place, then carry our sins to the cross which should have been ours. He died our death under God’s wrath so that we could enjoy eternal bliss in the fellowship of God in heaven. Together with the Lord and all believers of ages past we will celebrate **How Beautiful the Christ of Christmas!** Nail pierced **beautiful feet** fit our feet with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace. Don’t walk, dear Christians, run with **beautiful voices** to earth’s end. Amen.

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<sup>1 1</sup> Morgan, Robert J. *On This Day*. (www.Laridian.com)