

“See the Salvation of Our God”

Our text this morning is the antiphon we sang at the beginning and end of the Introit, taken from Isaiah 52 – but I’d also like you to hear verses 7-10.

Isaiah 52:7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” The voice of your watchmen – they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted His people; He has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” [This is the Word of the Lord]

Our world today is very much like the days of the prophet Isaiah. We live in a land of plenty, but darkness looms on the horizon. When violence, rebellion against all authority, rampant greed, and sexual promiscuity hardly even attract our attention – you know a creeping decay is rotting away our society.

Political campaigns, educational program, and governmental agencies may promise to come to our rescue – but you and your family know not to put your trust in princes. All the Christmas gifts touting comfort and peace are fleeting at best.

Our world wallows in the muck and mire of wickedness, and our own sin hangs around our necks, and weighs heavy on our hearts. If ever we were in need of a Divine rescue – now is the time. What a beautiful thing it would be if someone could bring us true, genuine, lasting comfort and peace. Oh, that the Lord would bare His holy arm so that we might “see the salvation of our God.”

And with the Incarnation of Our Lord – beautiful feet appear on the mountain to bring good news – to give you hope in these hopeless days – to proclaim to you that, “Your God reigns.”

The Lord HAS bared His holy arm. Like Simeon, He has given your eyes “to see the salvation of our God.” “Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted His people; He has redeemed Jerusalem.”

The message of Christmas is not just a hope, a dream, a wish for brighter days – it is the person and work of Jesus Christ – it is God in the flesh. God’s Son, “the Word become flesh” is your peace. He has come in the flesh to reconcile you to God – giving you true and lasting peace.

“Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth,” we sing. There is true peace in this world because God Himself has come into this world – Christ our Savior has come to dwell with us.

That beautiful message of peace shatters the peaceful night of the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks by night. To common, ordinary shepherd – comes the angel’s message of salvation. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Looking into the manger, it is hard to believe that here lays our salvation. We see no glory. We see no strength. How can the government be upon His shoulders? How can His arms defeat our enemies, and rescue us? And yet here in this Child, God has become man – “who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven.”

The glory of this child is hidden from our eyes, and revealed only to faith. This “good news of happiness” published to all the world is a mystery – and it most certainly does not come from man, because man always gets salvation backwards.

The false religions (man-made religions) teach that man must climb his way up to God – that man must become holy like God – and even that man can become God. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is just the opposite – that God comes to us – that true God becomes also true man.

The eternal Son of God enters into time and is born in Bethlehem. The Son of God who fills the universe is laid in a manger. The Son of God who is all powerful has His arms trapped by swaddling cloths. The Son of God who knows all things babbles and gurgles as a baby. The Son of God who satisfies the desire of every living thing is satisfied at His mother’s breast.

The mystery is even greater when you consider WHY the Son of God left His heavenly throne to take on human flesh and blood. He came to save us. He came to save sinners.

He who knew no sin – came to become sin – for us. God takes on our human flesh and blood to do what we've failed to do. He comes to do the will of His Father, which we have despised. He comes to endure the mocking, the shame, the curse – to bear our load, to receive the spit and stripes and blows that we deserve – to pour out His blood and give up His life for sinners to bare His holy arm for our salvation.

What a mystery – but one that is revealed by the Holy Spirit – for faith to receive. Just as Simeon was promised to see his Savior before he died – so this mystery is revealed to you today – that this little Child is your Redeemer – your Paschal Lamb, the very sacrifice that atones for all your sin – so that you may see your salvation.

This is the Gospel of the Lord – the good news of happiness that our Lord reveals and publishes to all with ears to hear – so that in faith, they may see the salvation of our God. Even now, the Christ comes to you in the flesh – to forgive your sin – to reconcile you to God – to give you true and lasting peace.

Therefore, let us break forth together into singing ... for the Lord has comforted and redeemed His people ... [for we have seen] the salvation of our God. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.