

# Christmas Day

## BEAUTIFUL LITTLE FEET

Isaiah 52:7-10

Christmas Day

Analysis by Lori A. Cornell

*7 How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,  
who brings good news,  
who announces salvation,  
who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'*

*8 Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,  
together they sing for joy;  
for in plain sight they see  
the return of the Lord to Zion.*

*9 Break forth together into singing,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the Lord has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.*

*10 The Lord has 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.*

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## DIAGNOSIS: Silent Ruins (v. 9)

**Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem)** : *Zion Uninhabited*  
(v. 8b)

While it may seem like Isaiah's prophecy is all good news, read

between the lines and you will see that things haven't been as happy as they may now sound. Before this the people of Israel haven't heard good news from Zion because they haven't been living anywhere near their home. They were not a nation, instead they were exiles—strangers in a strange land, Babylonian captives longing for what they do not have: a home.

**Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : Absentee Lord (v. 8b)**

The problem had been worse than that though: Not only have the people not had a land of their own for decades, but it seemed their God had checked out of Zion too. In other words, they have had no land, nor has the landlord been maintaining their home while they were away. But, truth be told, the people of God had been failing to keep up their end of the relationship with the landlord for a long time. They had walked out on God long before they began to wonder if God had abandoned them.

**Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : No News Is Not Good News**

The reason the people are so ecstatic at the prospect of receiving good news is that they haven't had any good news lately. God hasn't been speaking, not because God doesn't have something to say, but because no one seems to want to listen, so why would God choose to talk. And no news is *not* good news.

**PROGNOSIS: Go Tell It on the Mountain**

**Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : The Salvation of Our God (v. 10)**

What a relief it must have been for God's people to finally be able to hear that all the ends of the earth would see salvation from Israel's God. God had changed his mind; the weeping would only last for this night, but joy would come in the morning. But how could Israel ever have anticipated that this good news would come from such an unexpected place: the feet that would bring

this good news would be the tiny feet of a baby. With this baby's birth angels and shepherds would announce that "unto us a child is born who is Christ the Lord." Those same little feet that ushered in the good news, would soon be nailed to a tree. But this is where Isaiah's prophecy takes the most unexpected turn: Those feet (that walked miles to bring healing and hope) would be the very same feet that walked out of what seemed a forever-tomb bringing—not just political liberation for a nation—but the good news that death could not hold him, nor would it hold his people. [See Memling or Murillo or Fra Angelico's "Adoration of the Magi" for evidence that the church has associated the birth of Jesus with Isaiah's prophecy about beautiful feet bringing good news of salvation.]

**Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) :** *Beautiful Feet*

Love a little baby's pristine pink newborn feet all you want, but feet are feet. Soon enough those feet will bear the wear and tear of age and pain and will no longer be attractive. But what if those feet are deemed beautiful by the one who beholds them because they have bridged the eternal gap between heaven and earth? Only the eyes of faith can deem the feet of Jesus (be he a baby or the crucified one) beautiful. And in faith we behold his glory: These feet have crossed the insurmountable divide and brought God to us. For unto us is born (and dies and rises) a Savior, who is Jesus Christ the Lord.

**Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) :** *Return*

It is this good news that sets our feet into motion. Along with the shepherds and the magi and the generations of adorers before us, we get up and move. We who worship at the feet of Jesus this Christmas Day, also leave the site of the manger, taking with us the good news that God's salvation is for all. We can't help but walk this news out into the world, because when news is this good, and the feet of our Savior are this beautiful, we just have to "go tell it on the mountain."