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How Beautiful on the Mountains are the Feet of Those who Bring Good News 52: 7-12

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news DIG: What generation is this prophecy directed to? What is its purpose? Who are they afraid of? Why? What two messages could the watchman bring? How sure was Isaiah of this prophecy? How do we know? What anthropomorphism does Isaiah use to describe God's power? How is this departure similar or dissimilar to the exodus?

REFLECT: What does Paul say about beautiful feet in Romans 10:14-15? How do you best share your faith: (a) As an example to others? (b) Friendship evangelism? (c) Openly and boldly? (d) Silent witness? When is it helpful for an unbeliever to be confronted with a picture of how he or she appears to God? When might this be harmful? What can you learn about sharing the gospel from these verses? If you were put on trial for being a believer, would there be enough evidence to convict?

These verses continue the far eschatological prophecy to the believing remnant at the end of the Great Tribulation, in anticipation of the Good News. In his commentary on **Isaiah**, J. Vernon McGee comments on **Jerusalem** today. "One of the things you will not see about present-day **Jerusalem** is the lack of **songs of joy**. Around the Mosque of Omar (which stands on the Temple site) everything is in a minor key. If you go to the wailing wall, wailing is what you hear, and the Jews are knocking their heads against it. But the Millennium will be joyful- they will **burst into songs of joy and** they will sing **together**. It will be such a joyous time!"

He goes on to say, "Even today I don't think **God** likes to see [believers] walking around with long faces, complaining and criticizing. **He** wants us to have **joy**. The apostle **John** wrote, **We write this to make our joy complete (First John 1:40)**. The Millennium will be a time when **God** answers the prayer that our **Lord** taught **His** disciples: **Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (6:10)**. The tears and the sorrow will be gone; no longer will there be weeping on the earth. Instead there will be **joy**, and they will know that the Messianic Kingdom has come."

A Day is coming when **Isra'el** will be redeemed, but not with money (**to see link click Eu - The Rapture and the Great Tribulation** for the different names of the Great Tribulation). **Isaiah** hasn't said who will redeem her yet; that will come in **Chapter 53**. How will **Isra'el** know about this redemption? Someone will **proclaim the Good News**. They were to **stand firm** in the face of possible destruction by the antichrist. Would **Satan** crush them (see the commentary on **Revelation Ds - The Woman and the Dragon**), or would **ADONAI** fulfill **His** promises of deliverance? Suddenly, on a symbolic distant hill, a runner is seen. What is **the news**? As he comes nearer and nearer it can be seen that he is waving a victory palm like that used in building booths during the feast (**Zechariah 14:16-19**). **ADONAI** has won. Let the singing begin!

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news (52:7a). Specifically, this will be **the good news** of **God's salvation**. What **beautiful feet**! The word **those** in the Hebrew, literally mean *the one*. It should not suggest a group of runners, but a lone representative runner who comes with a radiant face and a spring in his step because he arrives with **good news**. That figurative runner will **proclaim peace**, he will **bring good tidings**, and he will also **proclaim salvation (52:7b)**! How is that salvation provided? We are told in the next chapter.

Peace, or *shalom*, with **God** signals the end of **His** wrath because **Isra'el's warfare had been completed (49:1 to 57:21)**. Paul would later take this verse and use it when describing the armor of **God**, saying: **Stand firm with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:14-15)**. What **gospel**, what **good news** is being delivered? It is specifically **the Good News of God's salvation**.

Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns" (Isaiah 52:7c; Psalms 93:1, 97:1, 99:1)! What does **His** reign lead to? It is a condition where everything is in its proper relation to each other. There is peace. There is freedom from sin. In short, the Messianic Kingdom was at hand. Proclaiming **the good news** with simultaneous peace, goodness and salvation. There is a two-fold response.

The first response is by the **watchman**. This is poetry, and therefore figurative speech and imagery are seen here. Although the term **watchman** is elsewhere applied to the prophets (**Isaiah 56:10; Jeremiah 6:17; Ezekiel 3:17, 33:2 and 7**), here it is merely part of **Isaiah's** figure of speech (**Isaiah 21:11-12; Second Samuel 18:24**). The first person to see any running figure, and deduce his message correctly, was normally the **watchman**. Both the symbolic watchman and the symbolic runner shout for **joy** as they see the evidence of **ADONAI's** coming to **Zion** in victory. The people of **the City** hear the clamor of their

voices and say to each other: **Listen!** The two of them are lifting **up their voices; together they shout for joy (52:8a)**. **Isaiah** envisions a Day when faith will pass into sight and **when the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes**, literally *eye to eye (52:8b)*. This does not imply being “in agreement,” but *with total clarity*.

The second response is seen in the **ruins of Jerusalem**. Once again, the figurative runner, as if anticipating a great revival says: **Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem**. Thus, **the ruins of Jerusalem** are now called upon to join **the watchman**, and the running messenger **and shout for joy (52:9a)**. Are **the ruins of Jerusalem** physical or spiritual? Probably both. On the one hand, a horrific battle had just taken place between the antichrist, his armies and the Jews in **Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:2 and 16a)**, but we also know that there will be tremendous changes in the Land during the Messianic Kingdom **(35:1-4)**. On the other hand, the antichrist will have set up his image in the Tribulation Temple to be worshiped by the whole world (see my commentary on **Revelation Dr - The Abomination That Causes Desolation**). But during the millennium **Yeshua Messiah** will rule and reign from the Most Holy Place in the Millennial Temple (see **Db - The Nine Missing Articles from Messiah's Coming Temple**). So whether physical or spiritual, the ruins of **Jerusalem** will have plenty of reasons to shout **for joy** and burst **into songs of joy**.

For the LORD has comforted His people (40:1, 49:13, 51:3 and 12), He has redeemed Jerusalem (52:9b). The two verbs, **comforted and redeemed** are both prophetic perfects. These verbs show a past completed action pictured as if it had already happened. They are at the heart of **Isaiah's** message, they speak of restored fellowship, deliverance from bondage, encouragement from despair, strength in weakness, and forgiveness of sin. When will **all Jerusalem** be **redeemed**? When **all Israel** is **saved (Romans 11:26a)** at the end of the Great Tribulation when the Jewish leadership recognizes who **He** is and pleads for **Him** to return as the Messiah (see my commentary on **Revelation Ev - The Basis for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ**).

As John Calvin comments, all this rejoicing is in anticipation. The evidence points to the victory of **ADONAI**. The signs show that he has defeated the enemy and is coming to set them free. But as of this moment, **He** is not yet here. Nevertheless, the people are called to participate in the hymn of thanksgiving and praise. Why? This is the faith and belief about which the prophet has been speaking throughout the book, and especially in this section. To give thanks in advance is the highest form of faith. The person praising **God** for what he or she does not possess is the person who truly believes in the promises of **the LORD**.²¹¹



ADONAI will lay bare His holy arm (the expression, *roll up our sleeves and get to work* would be an equivalent term today) **in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God (52:10).** This verse precludes this section being a description of the return from the Babylonian Captivity. When we take an objective look at history, it is obvious that **all the ends of the earth** did not **see the salvation of ADONAI** at that time. However, right before the Second Coming **the Servant** is pictured here as being ready for action, **His** sleeves are rolled up and the nations **will see Him** soon. There is a great deal of anticipation in this verse. Now it is about to be realized! **Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen (Revelation 1:7, and 5:5 and 19:11-21; Titus 2:13).**

These are critical concepts to understand. What two things are connected here? **God's holy arm** and **salvation**. When **God** bares **His holy arm** (**Isaiah** uses an anthropomorphism so that we can see this concept more clearly), **the earth** sees **salvation**. And what is the Hebrew word for salvation? *Yeshua*; *Jesus*. There is constant interplay between **God's arm** and **salvation**. **Isaiah** introduced this concept earlier: **My righteousness draws near speedily, My salvation is on the way, and My arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to Me and wait in hope for My arm. But My salvation will last forever, My righteousness will never fail (51:5 and 6b).** This is the fifth of nine references to the **arm of the LORD** in **Isaiah** (30:30 and 32, 40:10, 50:2, 51:5 and 9, 53:1, 59:1 and 16, 62:8, 63:5).

After **Isra'el's** national salvation and redemption, comes her final restoration. But there is a seventy-five-day interval following the last day of the Great Tribulation and the start of the Messianic Kingdom. Several things will take place at that time (see the commentary on **Revelation Ey - The Seventy-Five Day Interval**), and afterwards there will be a call for **all of Zion** to **depart** from wherever they are in the world in purity and holiness: **Depart, depart, go out from there! They are to touch no unclean thing. Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the LORD (52:11).**

The root of **depart**, *swr*, has the meaning of turning aside, or taking away, and is used in connection with the absolute separation from evil (**Jeremiah 4:4; 2 Chronicles 32:12; Isaiah 36:7; Ezekiel 11:19**). Something has happened to change them from defiled to clean. The central issue here is not physical bondage, but the bondage of evil with its corruption and defilement. If the return from the Babylonian Captivity were in view here, only the Levites would be permitted to carry those implements. But here **all of Zion** participates. They are **all** to purify themselves on the way to **Jerusalem** so that they may **carry the vessels of the LORD**. Because we know that **the vessels** commonly associated with the Tabernacle in the desert, or Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, will not be present in the Messianic Temple (see **Db - The Nine Missing Article's in Messiah's Coming Temple**), apparently *other vessels* will be needed for a purpose we do not know at this time. But what ever they are, they must be very important because those who carry them back to the Land need to **be pure**.

Then a distinction is made between the future final restoration, when Israel departs from all the nations of the earth back to the Land (see **De - God Is My Salvation, I Will Trust and Not Be Afraid**), and the exodus from Egypt. Whenever **Isaiah**, or any other Hebrew prophet begins to talk about the deliverance, it is the **Exodus** to which their minds turn sooner or later, and that is the case here. Back in **51:9-10 God** was reminded by the prayer concerning **His** miracles of the exodus. Now **God** returns to the **Exodus** motif and draws a distinction between the **Exodus** and the final restoration.

First, there are *two dissimilarities*. **God** says that at that future time **the Jews will not leave in haste or go in flight (52:12a)**. In the **Exodus**, however, **the Jews did leave in haste. They** were told to eat the Passover **with their cloak tucked into their belts, their sandals on their feet, and their staff in their hands. They were to eat in haste (Exodus 12:11)**. Secondly, **Jews** had to flee as a result of persecution from Egypt, but unlike the former deliverance, this one will not be in the middle of the night, scurrying away from potential pursuers. **They** will not have to flee persecution from anyone in the final restoration.

However, there are *two similarities*. In the **Exodus**, **God** was present, both **before** and behind **His people (Exodus 13:21; 14:19-20; Isaiah 42:16; 49:10 and 58:8)**. In front, **He** will lead, and behind, **He** will gather up the stragglers and be sure that they do not fall prey into the hands of **their** pursuers. So it will be in the future final restoration. **For the LORD will go before you, and the God of Isra'el will be your rear guard (52:12b)**. Therefore, there were *two dissimilarities* with the **Exodus** and *two similarities* with the **Exodus**.

When **Ahaz** was **king** of Judah, the Assyrian threat to **God's** people was very real. The reality of an attack and the fear that it brought was also very real. Therefore, **ADONAI** sent **Isaiah** to **meet him** and relay this message: **Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid (7:4)**. Little did **Ahaz** know that the supposed attack would never take place (see [Gw - Then the Angel of the LORD Put To Death a Hundred and Eighty Five Thousand Men in the Assyrian Camp](#)). **Isaiah** prophesied the same message to the persecuted believing remnant at the end of the Great Tribulation. Because **the Jews** will be just as terrified of the antichrist as **Ahaz** was terrified of the Assyrians, **He** reminds **them**, "**Don't be afraid.**" Little will **they** know that **their** utter destruction would never take place (see [Kh - The Eight Stage Campaign of Armageddon](#)). Because **ADONAI** will be with **them** and protect **them**, **they** need not fear. Is it any less true for us today?