



ISAIAH 52:10 | The LORD Bares His Arm as He Begins His Battle"

Thursday, December 25, 2014 – Festival of Christmas

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.

It had been a long time in coming. The wait has been nearly unbearable. World superpowers have risen and fallen. A flood ravaged the earth. God's people were held captive; and then they were let go. Canaan was conquered, a temple was built, the wisest man to ever live died. There were plots to kill and destroy, plans to steal and to fornicate, and threats to plunder and pillage. And yet, the battle had not begun...

God's people had stood at the foot of a mountain, dancing around a golden calf. They had experienced plague after plague in a godless country. His people had witnessed the slaughter of their heathen relatives to the north. They had been bombarded with messages of sin, repentance, and grace by prophets and judges alike. However, the battle had not yet begun...



But tonight, tonight the battle has begun. Don't be fooled by this innocent babe born in Bethlehem. Don't be enamored by the tiny fingers and toes. Don't be distracted by the soft cloths or the gentle arms of a new mother. Don't let yourself be tricked by the coos and the cackles of a young child. Lurking in the shadows is the enemy, waiting, watching, wanting for this child to become vulnerable.

You see, moments after the birth of this child, the battle began. Satan began to tempt, to lure, to toy with the soul of this baby. He used puppets in his game, too. Herod sent a death squad to find him. He even used Mary, Jesus' own mother to try to lure him away from the temple when he was a young boy. Satan had begun his assault, his last ditch effort, because he knew that his end was near.

That was readily apparent to the devil, and should be to us, too. Enjoy the innocence. Behold the baby born in a barn in Bethlehem. But remember the purpose for these meager surroundings. The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. Mankind's battle against sin was lost generation before. With a few words and a seed of doubt, Satan dragged mankind into the snares of sin. And from that point forward mankind could do nothing but. Mankind was cursed.

For generations humans would fight battle after battle against sin, death, and the devil. And for generations those unholy three would win. Time after time after time humans would fail miserably. And it's still happening today, isn't it? Even this morning Satan is at work, drawing your mind away from the one thing you need. Presents sit under the tree, tempting, enticing you to rush through the service today. A meal must be prepared, the food cooked, the wine uncorked, and you can barely focus on the

most important meal of the day today at the Lord's Table. Plans must be made for company and for travel, for parties and for get-togethers. But little time is planned to be in the Word on the very day that the Word was made flesh for us.

The battle continues to rage. Sin continues to destroy. And Satan seems to reign supreme. But Christ is born! The battle has begun. Don't be fooled by the innocence of a baby's demeanor. This babe born today is Christ, the Lord. He has come to conquer! He has come to proclaim victory! He has come to destroy the devil's work! Even in these first breaths, the first coos, the first whimpers and cries Satan was trying to cause this holy one to sin. But he resisted. He would continue to resist and continue to fight until his last dying breath. And at that point it would seem that all would be lost, that Satan had won, that death reigned supreme. But as the angels announced the birth today, "He is here!" so too would they announce the empty tomb: "He is not here!" Cloths once wrapped tightly around the body of a baby laying in the straw of a manger would be folded on the cold stone of an empty grave. This is Christ, the Lord!

So, dear Christians, rejoice! God's promise of a battle is fulfilled today. Today Christ begins his work to crush the serpent's head. Today he begins his task of locking him away once and for all. Today, Christ the Lord is born! Amen.



Soli Deo Gloria!

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