



[Rev. Steven S. Billings](#)

Sermon for Christmas Day
December 25, 2025

The Visible God

Isaiah 52:7–10

⁷How 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.”⁸The 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. ⁹Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰The 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.

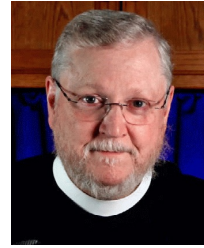
Last night, or perhaps today, most, if not all, of us tore through pretty packages with great excitement and anxious anticipation. Sadly, many of those presents will end up being tossed aside and forgotten in years to come. Some will not even last that long, but instead will be returned whence they came for a refund or exchange. In the Christmas aftermath, let's take a few minutes this morning to catch our collective breath and take notice of the fact that in the birth of Jesus our invisible God has made Himself visible in order to reign, restore, and revitalize His people.

The prophet Isaiah tells us in verse 7 of our text that our visible God has come to reign among His people. “How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good *things*, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”

He does not reign, of course, as an earthly king, with legions of soldiers ready to go to war. Jesus Himself said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” You’ll recall that His entrance into this world was hardly even noticed. It was to mere shepherds that His birth was announced. But it was nonetheless noteworthy, which is why Isaiah encourages us to hear the message of good news.

The Gospel is enfleshed by that baby in the manger. It's not a conditional grace or shaky peace that He brings, such as we have in this world. The rough-hewn grace-filled feed trough contains, rather, the very Bringer-of-Peace about Whom Isaiah wrote, "Unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be no end*" (Is. 9:6-7a).

No wonder the angelic choir sang their joyful praise at Jesus' birth, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14). No wonder Paul



[Rev. Steven S. Billings](#)

Sermon for Christmas Day

December 25, 2025

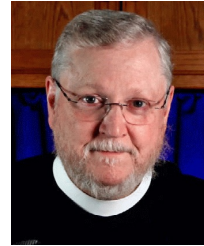
wrote to the Ephesians that Jesus "Himself is our peace" and that "He came and preached peace to those afar off and peace to those who were near" (Eph 2:14, 17). No wonder the angel instructed Joseph, "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matt 1:21). And to Mary he said, "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end" (Luke 1:28, 31-33). No wonder the heavenly host appeared to the shepherds and announced to them, "Today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). Aged Simeon meditated on the message, praying, "My eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32). Peter and John couldn't keep themselves from preaching to the rulers of Israel, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The newborn King, whose birth we celebrate today, is the fullness of good news, the giver and substance of salvation, and the One by whom our invisible God has made Himself visible in order reign, restore, and revitalize His people.

In verse 8 of our text, Isaiah tells us, "Your watchmen shall lift up *their* voices, With their voices they shall sing together; For they shall see eye to eye When the LORD brings back Zion."

Christmas can be a wonderful time to restore relationships with those we love. We look forward to those opportunities. But the true substance of Christmas is the restoration, not of earthly relationships, but of our relationship with God that we broke by our sinful rebellion. The Baby in Bethlehem's manger came to atone for our sins and, thereby, to repair our broken relationship with our Creator.

As we contemplate that great gift, we hear the voices of the watchmen. The shepherds heard the heavenly voice of an angel tell them the message of Christ's birth. Then they heard the angelic chorus sing a song of glorious praise to God. Were any of them present to hear Jesus teach the good news of the kingdom? Did they hear Him cry out from the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34). "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Were they among those who heard Him after His resurrection promising to be with His followers "even to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20)?

We hear Him today when we read and listen to His Holy Word, as it is read, preached, and sung. But we don't merely hear, do we. We see Him by faith in His Holy Supper, we see Him active by His Spirit in the waters of Holy Baptism. One day we shall see Him face-to-face, when we stand in His presence and behold His glory with our own eyes.



[Rev. Steven S. Billings](#)

Sermon for Christmas Day

December 25, 2025

But before then, we will see Him with his flesh ripped open, bruised and beaten, bleeding, a crown of thorns on His head, nails driven mercilessly into His hands and feet, hanging on Calvary's cross bearing the burden of our sins and dying for our salvation.

You see, the full meaning of Christmas is realized when we look beyond Christmas to Good Friday and Easter and see the blood-stained cross and the empty tomb. By His agonizing death and victorious resurrection, Immanuel rescued, redeemed, and restored us to our heavenly Father. Because of this, we no longer fear death and the grave, confident that eternal life awaits all who by Spirit-given faith cling to the One whose humble birth we celebrate today. Yes, by His incarnation, our invisible God has made Himself visible in order reign, restore, and revitalize His people.

Isaiah continues in verse 9: "Break forth into joy, sing together, You waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem."

Luke tells us that "the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them" (Luke 2:20). The Apostle Paul told the Thessalonians, "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word" (2 Thess 2:16-17).

The beloved Advent hymn echoes the words of Isaiah:

Speak ye to Jerusalem
Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell her that her sins I cover
And her warfare now is over."

Our response of joyful thanks is reflected in the words of that wonderful Christmas hymn that both celebrates Christ's birth and anticipates His final return:

"Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy."

Joy permeates our thanks for the Lord's coming so that we, too, return, glorifying and praising God for all we have heard and seen.

Think about what Christ's coming means for us. We were lost and condemned, and Jesus, the eternal Son of God, humbled Himself so that He might redeem us from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. As the angelic declared, "Fear not;



[Rev. Steven S. Billings](#)

Sermon for Christmas Day

December 25, 2025

for behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). Indeed, our invisible God has made Himself visible in order reign, restore, and revitalize His people.

Yes, God made Himself visible through the holy Christ Child, "who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary." He is Immanuel, "God with us in human flesh," who came to reign over us with mercy and grace, to restore us to our heavenly Father, and to revitalize us with the new life of faith through His means of grace. Glory to God in the highest and peace and good will toward men. In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen