

# “God’s Saving Love Frees Me”

## Isaiah 9:1-9

December 24,2010

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

It may have been a silent night when our Lord first appeared on earth as a man—when the Word of God became a speechless baby boy. But it didn’t stay silent for long. For soon after our Savior drew His first breath and exhaled His first cry, His army of angels knew it was game on. The invasion of Satan’s domain had begun. The army of angels sprang into action. They sought out the night watchmen, guarding their flock. They kept their silence no longer—how could they? How could they not bubble over with joy?

Yes, it was a dark and terrible world into which the Savior and His angels came - not at all what God had created. It had been broken and spoiled, all of it taken captive under the deadly dominion of the accuser of men - Satan. The ruthless father of lies had managed to turn man against God, brother against brother, spouses against each other, children against parents, and parents against their own flesh-and-blood. He planted the weeds of selfishness, envy, self-righteousness, pride, lust, and arrogance in what had been the Lord’s beautiful garden spot of Eden. Now fear and guilt lingered in the heart of every man along with every evil passion and rebellion. Not a single person since that terrible rebellion against the Lord of life had drawn a sinless breath. Worst of all, many broken sinners did not take to heart the promises of the coming Deliverer. They lived as if they had to solve their own problems. So off they trudged, sad and lonely, trying to keep cheerful by numbing their minds with meaningless melodies.

So how could the angels not bubble over with joy? They could see it—the beauty of it all—the perfect plan coming together. The Promised One has established a foothold in Bethlehem. He’s come to set His people free. The Prince of Peace is here to wage war against the father of all wars. So, allowed by the Lord, the angels appear before these night watchmen, and explain what happened on the planet earth, in humble Bethlehem, in a lowly stable just moments before.

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10–11)

You injured, troubled sinners, the Lord dispatched His landing party for you. Although it is smaller than anyone would expect, this army of One is greater than any ever before or ever after. The Father has sent His eternal Son. However, this Son has not arrived with shock and awe as on Mt.

Sinai as the kingdoms of power might expect. He has come humbly as the Lord promised through Isaiah:

“For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian” (Isaiah 9:4).

The day of Midian refers to when the children of Israel led by Gideon attacked the Midianites. Before the attack, 32,000 men gathered with Gideon to fight. But the Lord said this was too many. Let those who don't want to fight go home. 22,000 left. The remaining 10,000 were too many, the Lord said, and then selected, on the basis of how they drank water from a brook, only 300 to attack an army of tens of thousands. The 300 were stationed around the Midianite army at night with jars of clay over burning torches and trumpets. At Gideon's trumpet blast the 300 all sounded the attack on their trumpets, broke the clay pitchers, and held up brightly burning torches. The forces of the false god were driven into total confusion and attacked themselves.

So Jesus' attack on Satan's kingdom was “as on the day of Midian.” He made a sneak attack, small, at night, with the brightness of His divine glory hidden under the clay jar of His humanity. But make no mistake about it—this birth was not just a cute, Hallmark moment. It was the beginning of the break up of Satan's dominion, it was the regaining of God's rightful territory, and it was the beginning of true freedom for burdened, enslaved people. For the baby born is none other than the greater Gideon, the very Son of God hidden under human flesh and bone, the Savior born to you!

You who have been pressed down by the yoke of slavery, the burden of carrying guilt and shame because of all your traitorous transgression, look! This Son born to you breaks the burdensome yoke of sin by letting it press down on Him, beginning in a tiny manger and moving all the way to the weight of the cross. He declare “forgiven” and “free” all who trust in Him. Confess your weight of sin to Him and rejoice, for He takes it all away.

You who have been living in the darkness and gloom of the shadow of death, this Son born to you breaks forth in light, brilliantly shining. At the cross, bearing the full darkness of death in His own body, it appeared the light was extinguished. But He rose with the bright sun with rays of healing peace and joy that drive back death's reign. Death must release and set free Christ's people forever.

Satan and hell are thwarted. Sin and death have been defeated. “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and

upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.” Let Him comfort and defend you with His Word. Let Him feed and strengthen you with His body and blood. For He who once was born of Mary, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and placed in a manger, is here for you in His Holy Word and soon will be wrapped in bread and wine and placed on a plate and in a cup for Your salvation!

Yes, we’re surrounded by troubles and heartbreaks, and Satan, sin and selfishness relentlessly attack, but don’t just sit there—sing for joy! Your Savior is born! There is peace on earth for Christ, come for all, has set us free. Amen