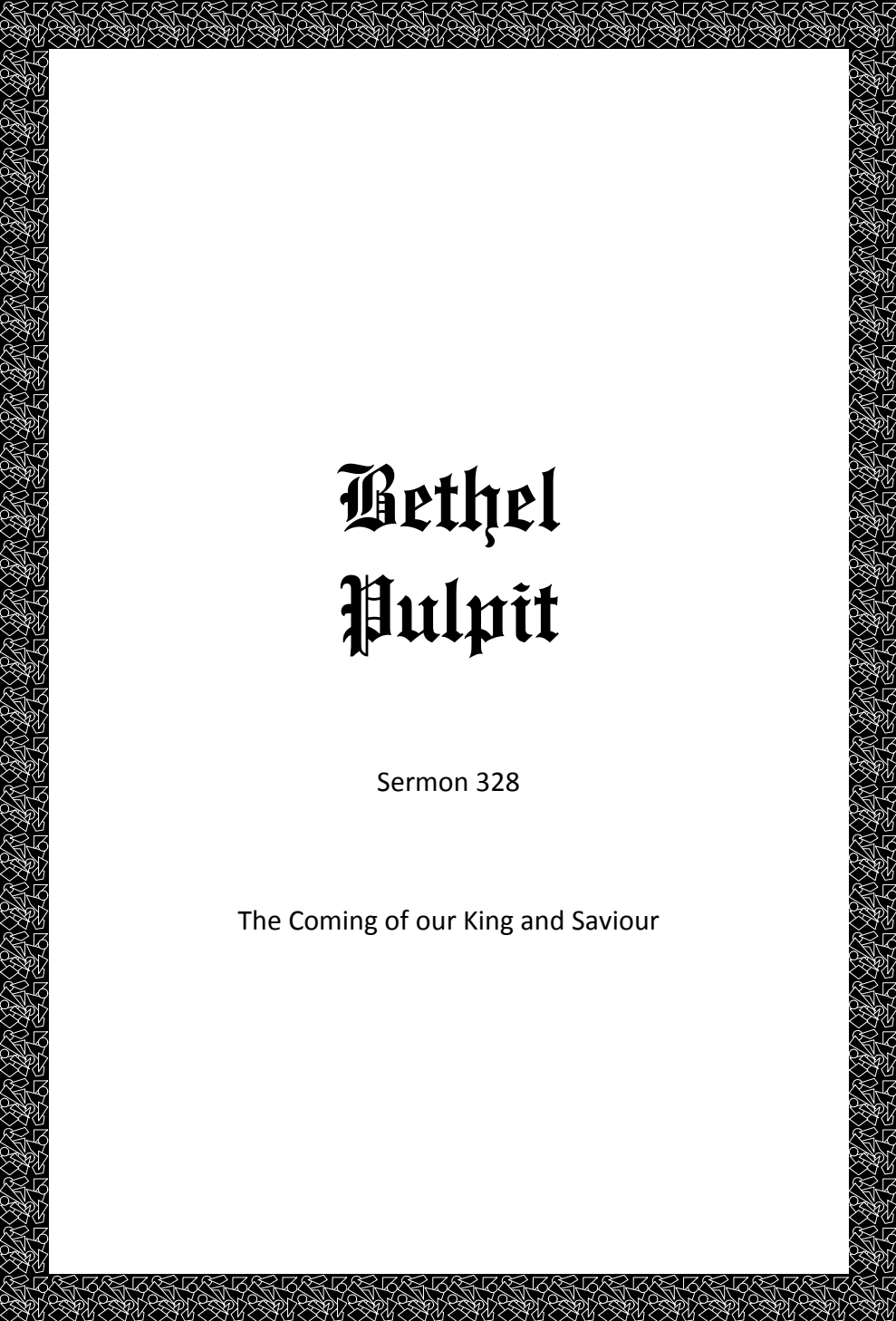




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 328

The Coming of our King and Saviour

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 7th December, 2008**

Text: “*Behold, thy King cometh unto thee*” (Zechariah 9. 9).

It was a long time before this word was fulfilled – nearly four hundred years – but at last it *was* fulfilled. All God's words will be fulfilled, and all God's promises will be fulfilled, even to those of you who seem to have waited long. I am sure the Old Testament church wondered whenever this prophecy would be fulfilled. They used to cry, “Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down.” And at last in His faithfulness, in fulfilment of His word, the Lord *did* come down, and this word *was* fulfilled: “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.”

There are many passages in the Old Testament which point to the Lord Jesus. There are many which are beautiful types of the Lord Jesus, but this is one of the few that are quoted in the New Testament and we are told that definitely this was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. So we read together this morning chapter 21 in the Gospel according to Matthew about the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ riding into Jerusalem, riding on an ass, riding into Jerusalem to die for sinners, and there we are clearly told that this was done that this word of the prophet might be fulfilled: “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.”

Many, many times I have told you that when we have this word *behold* in Scripture, usually something of vital importance follows. It is a call to listen; it is a call to attend. “Behold the Lamb of God.” “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.” “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” And so we might go on. “Behold.” But in its deepest, fullest sense it is a call to faith, to look to the Saviour, to trust in Him, to depend on Him, to see all your hope in Him, to see your salvation in Him. “None but Jesus.

“Behold your King!” And you remember that this was the very word that Pilate spoke when he brought forth Jesus wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. He said to the Jewish people, “Behold your King!” Whether he said it in scorn, or whether he said it in pity, we know he said it by divine appointment. “Behold your King!” And you

remember the solemn answer from the Jewish people: “We have no king but Caesar.” “His blood be on us, and on our children.” And that solemn denunciation they pronounced upon themselves has been fulfilled for two thousand years. It was soon followed by the destruction of Jerusalem with appalling cruelty and the Jews scattered to this day. It is a solemn thing, beloved friends, to hear this word in the gospel: “Behold, thy King,” and in spirit to say, “We will not have this Man to reign over us.”

“Behold your King!” At the Saviour’s birth the wise men came saying, “Where is He that is born King?” When He was crucified, Pilate wrote over the cross in Greek and Latin and Hebrew, “JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.” The people said, “Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am King of the Jews.” “What I have written I have written.” “Behold your King!”

So we have this wonderful revelation that the meek and lowly Jesus who rode into Jerusalem on the ass to die is Zion’s God and King. “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh” – King of grace and King of glory, reigning in heaven upon the throne, reigning in the hearts of all His people, once crowned with thorns, now for ever crowned with eternal glory. “Behold, thy King.” It would be a wonderful thing if any of us are blessed with faith this morning to behold the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, not only as King of grace and glory, but to crown Him as King in our lives.

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” Well, He came into this world of sin and sorrow. He was born at Bethlehem. And though He was King of kings and Lord of lords, He came in meekness and lowliness, the meek and lowly Jesus. What matchless condescension! “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich,” and it is a deep, mysterious subject, the riches of the eternal Son of God before He came. But one part of His riches was this: He was reigning in heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords. “Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.” “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” O the condescension, the veiling of His glory, the taking on Him the form of a servant, “being found in fashion as a man,” being obedient “unto death, even the death of the cross.”

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” Some of the Puritans, and I am thinking of godly Richard Sibbes, contended that this was the greatest act of love and condescension, the coming of the Saviour and His birth, and they felt we never really realise the wonder of it. If we *really* believed that the Lord Jesus, the Creator of all things, the mighty God, the King of kings and Lord of lords – if we *really* believed that He humbled Himself and came in such poverty, “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” it should have an effect on every detail of our life. It should humble us. It should fill our hearts with amazement. It should fill our hearts with love.

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” So He came to this earth and He lived upon this earth, and He came that He might suffer, bleed and die. That beautiful account we read this morning, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ riding into Jerusalem, lowly, riding upon an ass. The condescension of the Lord Jesus, riding into Jerusalem to die.

“Ride on! Ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die.”

But this verse contains something that is not quoted in the New Testament in Matthew 21, when Zion’s God and King came, when He came to this earth and when He rode into Jerusalem: those two words: “*Having salvation.*” He came from heaven with a covenant engagement to save. He came as One almighty to save. He became a real Man that He might have the ability to suffer, and He rode into Jerusalem, “having salvation,” having it engraven on His heart, having it as His divine purpose. “Having salvation.” And He came that poor, wretched, unworthy sinners saved by grace might have this salvation eternally.

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” He rode into Jerusalem to suffer, bleed and die. It is a wonderful word: “Behold thy King cometh unto thee.” But the meekness and lowliness of the Lord Jesus: “Lowly, and riding upon an ass”! “Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again.” “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” The meek and lowly Jesus.

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” I can really see two sides to this coming of the Lord Jesus. You know what our hymnwriter says: “Thou visitest sinners still.” What a mercy! He comes to sinners still,

comes to them personally, comes to save them, comes to bless them. So, “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,” which He did when He was born. He came to die, and then He rose and ascended. But this word is constantly being fulfilled: “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,” personally and savingly. And I have felt as we approach the Christmas season once more as a congregation, we can seek no greater blessing than this, if this word should be fulfilled this year with you and me personally: “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” Now may we pray for it and may we seek it, and if we get it, that will be the best present we shall have.

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” O but do you say, Who is this *thee*? Well, here it is Zion, the blood-bought church of God. But what is Zion? A multitude of sinners hoping in the Saviour’s mercy and blood. “Behold, thy King cometh unto *thee*.” He has promised to come to the solemn assemblies of His people. When His people meet together for worship and prayer on the Lord’s day and in the week, there is a sure, clear promise that the Lord Himself will come, really, truly, though unseen. It is a wonderful promise concerning our gathering in the house of God. “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” You know what our hearts respond. Well, I believe they do:

“We humbly for Thy coming wait,
Seeking to know Thee as Thou art;
We bow as sinners at Thy feet,
And bid Thee welcome to our heart.”

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” Our hymnwriter, in his beautiful hymn on the Lord’s day, says this:

“The King Himself comes near,
And feasts His saints today.”

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,” the assemblies of His people, to favour them with His presence, to bless His Word. O may we know it, experience it, feel it!

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” The word this morning says, “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy *King* cometh.” In Isaiah 62 there is a similar word, but it says this: “Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy *salvation* cometh.” So when the King comes, He brings salvation.

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” But it is this *thee*. Are there any here like Simeon waiting for the consolation of Israel? Perhaps you have waited long. The consolation, the comfort of knowing the Lord has forgiven you, saved you, washed you in His blood; the consolation of knowing you are right for eternity; the consolation of feeling the Saviour’s love in your heart. “Waiting for the consolation of Israel.” “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” And then you will say, “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.”

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee” – those who are seeking His face. As J.C. Philpot said on one occasion, there is one scripture that the devil can never erase and it is this: “Those that seek ... shall find.” Those of you who are seeking the Saviour. But do not take it for granted you are seeking Him. Those of you who are seeking the Saviour because you need Him, you must have Him, and you cannot do without Him. “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee” – those of you who feel your sinfulness and your guilt and long to be forgiven, to be cleansed from it. “Behold, thy King cometh unto *thee*,” in all your sin and all your unworthiness. “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,” to wash thee in His precious, sin-atoning blood and to fit you and prepare you for heaven. “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee” – those of you who from your very heart have to say, “O when wilt Thou come unto me?”

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” You know what Hosea says. He speaks of those who shall find Him when they seek Him with all their heart, and he says, “His going forth is prepared as the morning.” Do you know what that means? As sure as the dawn. Tonight will probably be a very dark night and a very frosty night, but there is no-one here so foolish as to think that when it comes to eight or nine o’clock tomorrow morning, it will still be pitch dark. How do you know? Because there is a divine decree: morning and evening, day and night, as long as the earth shall be. “His going forth is prepared as the morning.” It is sure as the dawn. His first coming was. They had to wait a long time – when you think of that first promise made in the Garden of Eden. We do not want to be speculative, but I just say this aside in passing. Many of the old, godly divines believe that when the first baby was born, Eve thought he was the Messiah, the Saviour, from the way she spoke, the emphasis: “I have

gotten a man from the Lord.” Many of the old, godly divines believed that Eve thought she had the Saviour in her arms because she was so sure of the Lord’s promise. And the awful thing: she had a murderer in her arms.

They had to wait a long time, but His coming is prepared as the morning, as sure as the dawn. He did come. So it is with His second coming. It is sure; it is certain; it is appointed. “He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness.” It is your mercy and mine if we have been led to see the certainty of His second coming. Then the angel shall say, “Let time be no longer,” a never-ending eternity will be ushered in, and the heavens shall be rolled up as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. And beloved friends, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved,” all of them, every one of them, “What manner of persons ought ye to be?” And you know the answer to that, almost all of you, if not all of you. “What manner of persons *ought* ye to be?” But then there is a different question: What manner of persons *are* ye?

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” He came first not to judge the world but to save the world, but He shall come in judgment – the certainty of His coming. “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.” Is there one person here this morning who can honestly say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus”? You are ready; you are waiting. Dear old Francis Covell of Croydon, one of our best ministers, someone came to see him. (Wasn’t he a godly man? Wasn’t he blessed? Didn’t he do a lot of good?) But he said, “I think each morning when I get up, if the Lord were to come and say to me, ‘Now Covell, I have come,’ I should reply, ‘Here I am, any minute, Lord.’”

“Behold, He cometh.” But if His first coming is sure and His second coming is sure, there are so many things on the second coming we do not understand. There was an old minister and a young man down in Cambridgeshire years ago, and they spent a lot of the weekend talking about all the details of the second coming. On the Monday morning, the young man took the minister to the station, and as the train was coming in, the old man put his hand on the young man’s shoulder and said, “We have talked a lot about the second coming this weekend. The great point is to have an interest in the Saviour’s first coming, and then everything will be right when He comes again.”

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” His first coming was sure; His second coming is sure; and whether you call it a third coming – that is not a right expression! – but this personal coming to bless longing, seeking souls who have had it burnt in their hearts that one thing is needful, who must have Him, who cannot do without Him, who have to say, “I cannot do without Thee, Thou Saviour of the lost.” His coming is certain to you. “Behold, thy King cometh *unto thee*.” In the Song of Solomon, in the second chapter, hidden away among the beautiful language, you have these three words: “Behold, He cometh” – the very same words we have here, the very same words we had in Matthew 21. “Behold, He cometh.” And can you remember what follows? “Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.” And why? Well, He is the heavenly Bridegroom and He sees His beloved bride there longing for His appearing. She is waiting for Him. She is there in all her sorrow and need, and He comes leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills like a roe or a young hart that He might come *right where she is*. That is what some of you want. “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” You want Him to come like the good Samaritan, right where you are.

O but these hills, these mountains! Some of you feel it – your sin, your guilt, your unworthiness, your prayerlessness, your hardness of heart. But they do not stand in the way of the Lord’s coming. It is easy for Him to come over them all, leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills, to come right where you are. The figure is a roe or a young hart. Some of these mountain deer can climb to impossible places on the rocks. They can stand where there seems to be nowhere to stand and they can leap across a narrow gorge. That is a lovely figure. “Behold, He cometh.” Then there are other mountains. The hymnwriter says, “Mountains pointing to the skies.” These sorrows and afflictions and troubles that so many of you are in – do you think He has forgotten you, and do you think He is going to leave you, and do you think He is going to break His promise? If He does with you, it will be for the first time.

“Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills,” to come right where you are and to do everything for you that you need, and then you will behold your King. May the Lord in love and mercy fulfil it in our midst and in our hearts.

“Behold, Thy King cometh unto thee.”