

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 58 The Saviour's Coming

Reading: Malachi 3. 1-6

1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

6 For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Address

Those who follow the church calendar call this season *Advent*. Of course, the word simply means coming, the coming of the Saviour. I think with many the thought is as well of waiting, waiting for His coming.

Really, beloved friends, there are three comings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The first is when He was born at Bethlehem. We have the promise of it here: "Behold, I will send My messenger" – that is John the Baptist – "and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek" – the One that Israel, the Old Testament church long awaited – "the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly" – unexpectedly – "come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant" – there is a lot of divinity there – "the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." Now the

Old Testament church waited long, and generation came and generation passed away, and the cry was still, “Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence!” But, “Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.” And He did, and He came as the Messenger of the covenant with a covenant purpose to fulfil, the terms of the covenant, to seal the covenant with His blood, to bring in new covenant blessings. “Behold, He shall come.”

And then there is the second coming, and it is the certainty of it just as here. “Behold, He shall come.” They say, “Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” “Behold, He shall come,” not in poverty, but in power and glory; not to suffer, but to judge the world in righteousness; not to wear a crown of thorns, but wearing a crown of eternal glory. “Behold, He shall come.” And the great point surely with you and me is to be right, to be ready. And as the old preacher said, if we have an interest in His first coming, then we shall have nothing to fear at His second coming.

But then, of course, there is that spiritual coming, the Lord coming personally to dwell in our hearts the hope of glory, to meet our cases, to deliver us, to grant His help, to save us. And so thinking at this time of His first coming, our cry is now personal: “When wilt Thou come unto me?” And we want Him to come as in the Song of Solomon, “Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.” Well, you have got them, haven’t you? mountains, hills, problems, difficulties. You cannot get round them or over them. What about that great mountain of sin, guilt, unbelief that comes between you and the Saviour? “Behold, He cometh” – it is the same word we have here. “Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.” And He comes to stand behind our wall and to show Himself through the lattice. That is what we want, for the Saviour who did come and who will come to come to us personally in salvation. “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation.”

Now my thoughts and my burden for our prayer meeting this evening are something like this: if this is the Advent season, though of course we do not strictly follow any church calendar, but during the next month, some of you are going to be very busy, mothers and children, and housewives, and those of you at work, and your preparations and your cards and your presents, and all these things. There was an article written recently and the sum and substance of it was something like this: “This would be a wonderful Christmas to me *if*” And

different people have a different *if*. The world has its *if*. The religious world has its *if*. You have your *if*. I have my *if*. And the Lord knows what our *if* is, and what is it? “This would be a wonderful Christmas to me *if*...” I am sure some of you know a right answer, a gracious answer.

But I have thought concerning our prayer meeting that we might pray to be prepared, and that the Lord might be with us, and that our affections might be on things above, and that we might not be swallowed up with inferior things. We cannot avoid them (but not to be swallowed up with them), but may there be that prayer that amidst it all the Lord will come to us, that we might by faith go even to Bethlehem, that Christ might be revealed, Christ made precious.

I wonder what kind of a season it is going to be to us. I go back in my life. When you are a child, you look forward to it, the happy things and the presents and everything. Then as you grow older, you begin to understand a little bit just what it means, who the Lord Jesus is, and that He was born at Bethlehem and why He came. And perhaps as time went on you were really interested in this, but you were still dead in sin. And then there came a time, and with me I could tell you the year, when there was a kind of dark cloud over it, when there was not really any happiness, there was not really any enjoyment, there was not really any pleasure. What was it? “Eternity, tremendous sound!” and not ready, not right, and that dark cloud like a black pall over it all. And you see, there comes a year when it is not just that the Saviour came, but *did He come for me?* And then the time, the first time when as you were thinking of all these things, you felt you were inside them instead of outside them, and that was a blessed thing. So I do not know what stage you are at, but there is a promise here to those who wait for His appearing. We sing it sometimes:

“Still we wait for Thy appearing,
O Thou mild, pacific Prince!
Give the knowledge of salvation,
Give the pardon of our sins.”

And that promise: “Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.”

*This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Monday, 29th November, 2010*

He comes; the Saviour full of grace,
By ancient prophets sung;
The smile of mercy on His face,
And truth upon His tongue.

In Him the world no beauty sees,
No form nor comeliness;
Rejected and despised He is,
And plunged in deep distress.

But there's a people taught by grace
To know His matchless worth;
They own Him, though accounted base,
And show His praises forth.

They own Him as the Lord of all,
Their Saviour and their God;
Before His feet they prostrate fall –
The purchase of His blood.

T. Kelly