

Second Sunday in Lent (2/28/10 – Behold, the Son of God, Who Comes to Bless You)

In the Name JESUS. [Amen]

Behold, the Son of God, Who Comes to Bless You. Jesus comes as your Healer – **both** of body **and** of soul. Jesus comes as your Prophet – **both** to proclaim His Law that condemns you in your own rebellion against His good and gracious will **and** to preach to You His Gospel that announces that He Himself will gather you under His loving protection. Jesus comes as your Savior – to be rejected and abused and crucified that He might bless you with forgiveness, life, and salvation. Jesus comes as your Blessed One – the One of Whom **we** shall say in just four weeks: ***Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!*** ... together with that ancient ***Palm Sunday*** crowd and with the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven. [LK 13.35; JN 12.13] ***Behold, the Son of God, Who Comes to Bless You.***

In our *Holy Gospel* for this ***Second Sunday in Lent*** we hear the Pharisees warning Jesus that Herod wants to kill Him [13.31]. Whether they sincerely desire to protect Jesus' life in keeping with the *Fifth Commandment* or they just want Jesus out of their district and “out of their hair,” the effect is the same. Behind the warning to ***Get away from here*** [13.31] is satan ... trying to distract Jesus from His goal. But our Savior will not be tempted ... will not be detoured – as we heard already last week. ***Go and tell that fox, “Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.”*** Jesus responds. A bit more literally, He says: ***and the third day I am brought to My goal – I am perfected,*** the King James translates. It is the Word that our Lord speaks from the Cross when He has done all the work of our salvation: ***It is finished*** [JN 19.30]. ***Behold, the Son of God, Who Comes to Bless You.*** He will not be tempted or distracted or detoured until He has completed your salvation – suffering on the Cross for you ... rising from the grave the third day for you!

Now what comes a bit further on in our text is a sobering warning and

reminder to us all! *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!* [13.34] Just like inexperienced little chicks – self-willed ... rebellious ... ignorant of the great dangers that lurk about us and within us – not only the people of Jerusalem but **all** people ... **including you and me** ... so often run away from our Lord's tender call and protection. We want to be the "big rooster" in the chicken-yard of life – standing proud on **our own** ... deciding when everyone should awaken to **our** crowing ... ruling the roost of **our** lives ... chasing away even the hand that feeds us. We run away from our Lord's gracious, loving gathering. HE would guard and protect us under the divine safety of His wings. **We** want to do things our own way. **HE** would protect us from that evil serpent of old. **We** think we're big enough little chicks to peck it to death on our own. But every time we let ourselves be drawn to the devil's tempting voice, **we** put ourselves in grave danger of being swallowed whole ... and drug down into that viper's den. The **LORD** would protect us from the storms of life under His shelter – **we** go running out into the lightning storms of temptation and sin. That big world can look so inviting – we don't realize how easily it is able to pluck us.

And the end result of such rebellious foolishness? *Behold, your house is forsaken*, Jesus says [13.35]. They want to be rid of Jesus already – before He is brought to His goal just outside Jerusalem's walls? There is nothing good that can come from that. Remember that the next time you are tempted – the next time the devil or the world or your sinful flesh would try to entice you to leave the protection of the Lord. Remember that when your flesh goads you into sleeping in instead of rising up to be gathered into the House of the Lord – where He would keep you safe under the blessed light of His Word and Sacrament. Do not find that you have made yourself an enemy of the Cross of Christ by neglecting His call to return to Him in repentance and faith – but instead spurn Him ... reject Him ... and stone Him with your sin.

Do not find that your house **and soul** are forsaken. Repent! And be gathered to Christ!

Behold, the Son of God, Who Comes to Bless You. Consider just what it is that He is so resolute to finish. Your Savior has no “martyr complex” – though He will be martyred. It is not some self-destructive desire that drives Jesus to Jerusalem and the Cross – but only His desire to work your salvation. It is not His Own thinking ... His Own plan – but the divine plan conceived out of Trinitarian love for you ... even before the foundation of the world. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in divine foreknowledge saw mankind’s Fall into sin ... and the corruption of His creation ... and your own sin and death and hell – and then lovingly conceived a blessed plan to reconcile you to Himself ... forgive you all your sin ... rescue you from the eternal torments of hell ... and give you eternal, heavenly life.

That is precisely what Jesus is saying in verses 32 and 33 of our text: *Go and tell that fox, “Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I am brought to My goal. Nevertheless, it is necessary for Me to journey today and tomorrow and the day following, for it is impossible that a prophet should perish outside Jerusalem.”* It is **necessary**, Jesus says – **necessary** for Him to travel toward Jerusalem ... where He shall be brought to His goal by God the Father. It is **necessary** because divine justice requires it – either **we** will pay for our sinful rebellion and die eternally ... or **the Son of God** will pay our debt for us so that we may live with God forever. It is **necessary** because God’s eternal love for us requires it – God does not desire the death of the sinner, but that we repent and turn to Him in faith and live [EZE 33.11]. Thus, Jesus **must** be brought to the goal of working our salvation on the Cross ... and then resurrecting the third day! God Himself has made it **necessary!** Divinely necessary!

And that **must** happen at Jerusalem. For Jerusalem has been the focal point of the Lord’s gracious work to forgive sins and give back true life.

Jerusalem – New Salem ... New Peace – is where the Temple was built ... as the permanent location of God's gracious presence ... and the yearly atoning sacrifice brought the peace of sin forgiven and reconciliation with God. Jerusalem is where the Ark of the Covenant – with its mercy seat – was housed ... until the sinful rebellion of the Jews led God to punish and disperse them ... allowing the Temple to be ransacked and the Ark removed. Jerusalem is the place where nearly all the prophets of the Lord proclaimed God's holy Word – both Law and Gospel ... dispersion and gathering ... destruction and rebuilding ... death and life. Jerusalem is the place where a great many of the great prophets were rejected and put to death – precisely **because** they proclaimed God's Word faithfully ... including the promise of the Savior Son.

Behold, the Son of God, Who Comes to Bless You. He will come to Jerusalem and be rejected. He will come to Jerusalem and be shamed and spit upon. He will come to Jerusalem and be beaten mercilessly. He will come to Jerusalem and be crucified cruelly. He will come to Jerusalem and receive the wrath of the Father against **your** sin. He will come to Jerusalem and die an agonizing, bloody death. He will come to Jerusalem and atone for sin. He will come to Jerusalem and the third day rise from the grave.

Behold, the Son of God, Who Comes to Bless You. With His life and death and resurrection, Jesus comes to bless you. And even now – and in **this** place – He comes to give you New Peace. Here the Son desires to gather you under the safety of His wings. Here the Son desires to guard and protect you from sin, death, and devil. Here the Son sets before you His Cross and Resurrection. This House is not forsaken – but blessed with the gracious, loving, forgiving presence of Christ your Lord and Savior.

Behold, the Son of God, Who Comes to Bless You – both now and forever more. *Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!*

In the Name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT. [Amen]