



# Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 38

The King in His Beauty

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,  
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,  
on Lord's day evening, 18th September, 1988**

**Text:** *“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off” (Isaiah 33. 17).*

What a wonderful mercy to be given seeing eyes, eyes that see, because the great mass of fallen humanity live and die in spiritual blindness! “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.” The solemn thing is that by nature each one of us is spiritually blind. We have unseeing eyes, blind eyes, yet we do not realise our spiritual blindness, and O what an eternally-solemn thing it is to die strangers to the things of God, with eyes that are blinded to them! Why, the wisest of men, the greatest of men, is blind in the things of God, and that separating truth must stand to the end of time: “The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.”

Now God opens the eyes of all His chosen. The time comes when their blind eyes are made to see. The ancient promise must be fulfilled: “In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.” So the first work of the Holy Ghost in the new birth in giving life is this, to open blind eyes. Then you will see for the first time spiritually. You will see things you never saw before, things which you never saw by nature.

What are these things that you will see if God has given to you seeing eyes? Well, you will see eternity in all its solemnity. You will see the judgment day. You will see what lies before, the eternal separation. You will have a glimpse of heaven. You will have a glimpse of hell. Now tell me, have your eyes, your blind eyes, ever been opened so that you viewed eternity as you never saw it by nature, as you never saw it before? “Eternity, tremendous sound.”

You will see the world as you never saw it before. You will see it in the light of Ecclesiastes: “Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity.” You will look upon those things that once delighted you, once pleased you, once attracted you. You will see death written upon it all. “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his

own soul?” You will see the whole lot of it as vanity and vexation of spirit.

Also, you will see yourself as you really are. You will see yourself lost and ruined, unfit to live, unfit to die, unprepared for your end. You will see that your very righteousness is filthy rags. You will see something of the purity and holiness and spotlessness of God, and yourself, your best stained and dyed with sin, your all nothing worth. And so having your eyes opened, this will be solemn.

You will see things in the Word of God. You will say, “I cannot remember reading that before.” You will see things in well-known chapters you have read over and over again. They will seem to stand out. It is like the old man who heard John Kershaw. He had to realise that he had not got a new Bible; rather he had new eyes. Joseph Hart said,

“And did the blind receive their sight,  
Only such dismal things to see?”

And they will be dismal things.

But there will be another thing. The Lord will show you that He has a people. You will see them in all their blessedness as they stand eternally complete in Christ. You never saw that before. You perhaps despised them. You perhaps thought they were peculiar. But now you see them in all their blessedness, as clearly as Balaam did when he looked down from that mountain top and saw Israel abiding in tents. “How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob!” You will see the eternal blessedness of the people of God. You will see them as the excellent of the earth. You will see something of the goodness of His chosen and the gladness of His inheritance. It is a wonderful mercy to have seeing eyes, eyes that see things you never saw before, things that you never saw by nature.

But you see, the end of the Lord opening the eyes of the blind will always be this: “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” This is the promise that God makes to all those whose eyes He opens, all those of you whose eyes have been opened to see the solemnity of eternity so that you long and pray to be prepared for it; those of you whose eyes have been opened to see the vanity of this world so that you can never be satisfied with it – you have to flee from it; those of you whose eyes have been opened to see something of your sin and guilt and who pray to be forgiven,

who pray to be washed in the Redeemer's blood. This is your promise. "Thine eyes" – those seeing eyes, those eyes that have been opened, those eyes that have received their sight – "thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty" – in measure by faith here, and then eternally for ever and ever in heaven without a veil between.

Then what a promise! "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." You longing, enquiring, venturing souls, those of you who have written bitter things against yourself, those of you who are looking forth as the morning (Song 6. 10), those of you who have not the sweet assurance of faith and yet you can dare to say, "One thing I know. I was blind, but now I see." You know there is a difference. You cannot, you dare not deny it. You know that you do see things you never used to see, you never saw by nature. Now to you is this word of salvation sent.

"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." Now of course in heaven that will be with your bodily eyes. Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Here on earth it is not some visionary thing:

"Not with our mortal eyes,  
Have we beheld the Lord";

but it is with the eye of faith. The last one on earth to see the Lord Jesus with his bodily eyes was Saul on the road to Damascus. It is made clear in Scripture that this was not just a dream, it was not just a vision. He looked right into heaven and with his bodily eyes he viewed the Lord Jesus. From then until time shall be no more, none of us see the Lord Jesus with these bodily eyes, but the eye of faith shall see the King in His beauty. Now what a subject is this, the King in His beauty!

"Living tongues are dumb at best;  
We must die to speak of Christ."

The beauty of His Person as the Son of God from everlasting, as He stood in union with His eternal Father. But the beauty of His sacred humanity.

“But lo! He leaves those heavenly forms;  
The Word descends and dwells in clay,  
That He may hold converse with worms,  
Dressed in such feeble flesh as they.”

Now, “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” The beauty of this glorious God-Man, the Mediator, very God and very Man in one glorious Christ. O the beauty, the attraction that some of us have seen in the Man Christ Jesus, in His sacred humanity, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens,” everything in the Lord Jesus that we lack! “My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.”

“Thine eyes shall see the King” in the beauty of His incarnation. “He took the dying traitor’s place.” That is the beauty of His incarnation. “Let me see God in my nature,” said Luther. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took part of the same.”

Now thine eyes shall see this, “the King in His beauty.” O the beauty of His baptism, when the Holy Ghost as a Dove descended on His sacred head and that voice was heard from heaven: “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” O you know, over the years I have seen such a beauty in the baptism of the Lord Jesus. “Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” The wonderful honour, the wonderful privilege that sinful men and women, boys and girls, are permitted to follow Him!

“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” The beauty of that glorious righteousness which He wrought out by His obedience to His Father’s law! O what a beauty there is in Christ’s righteousness, that wedding garment for all His people, for “the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

“Their beauty this, their glorious dress,  
Jesus, the Lord our righteousness.”

So the psalmist prays, “Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.” What does he mean? How can the beauty of the Lord Jesus be upon me, a sinner? Well, as He takes away my polluted, covenant-of-works

righteousness and replaces it with that beautiful righteousness of His own so that a holy God looking on a guilty sinner can see no spot, no flaw, in him.

“Their beauty this, their glorious dress,  
Jesus, the Lord our righteousness.”

“Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.” There is a divine appointment in Zion. Do you know what it is? “To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion . . . beauty for ashes.” The beauty of Christ’s righteousness for the ashes of their own. The work of the Holy Ghost will be to burn up the whole of your own creature righteousness. You will see it in ashes. Then the Lord Jesus will give you the beauty of His own righteousness. It is a divine appointment, “to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion . . . beauty for ashes.”

“Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty.” O the beauty of His temptation, that He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”! The beauty of that loving sympathy! The beauty of the loving understanding!

But especially faith views the beauty of Christ in His sufferings. The Puritans used to say that Christ is “never more beautiful to His people than when He was most deformed for them.” For “His visage was so marred more than any man. and His form more than the sons of men.” O to have a little glimpse of those bitter sufferings, those agonies of the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane and at Calvary! “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty” there.

“So fair a face bedewed with tears;  
What beauty e’en in grief appears!  
He wept, He bled, He died for you;  
What more, ye saints, could Jesus do?”

“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” The beauty of that atonement He has made! The beauty of that finished redemption! The beauty of that precious blood that cleanses from all sin! “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” The beauty of His death, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension! “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty,” now ascended, exalted in heaven. Do not forget that the word here speaks of the Lord Jesus as Zion’s God and King. He is “the King

in His beauty.” And as the King He wears the crown. O by faith we look to the judgment hall. We look to the cross, and we see this King in His ignominy and shame, crowned with thorns. “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty” – crowned with thorns. And there, child of God, if the Holy Ghost reveals it to you, you will see every one of your sins as so many thorns in His crown. But “thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty,” now for ever crowned with glory.

“His head, the dear majestic head,  
That cruel thorns did wound.  
See what immortal glories shine,  
And circle it around.”

“The King in His beauty.” And “on His head were many crowns,” and every sinner saved by grace puts his own crown on the Lord’s head. You know, this is what some of you long to see in the preaching of the gospel, isn’t it? The crown put upon the Saviour’s head. Recently a godly deacon said this to me before preaching. He said, “Do you know what I have been praying for the service today?” I said, “No.” He said, “Well, I have been thinking of Jehoiada. We read of him (2 Kings 11. 12) that he brought forth the king’s son and put the crown upon his head.” Now that is the preaching that will delight your soul, to see the King in all His beauty in the gospel. “He brought forth the king’s son and put the crown upon him.”

O you see, there is the beauty of His suitability. There is everything in the Lord Jesus that you need, that you ever can need, everything you seek: grace to forgive your sins; precious blood to cleanse them, to put them away; able to save unto the uttermost; mercy there abounding over all your sin; precious promises that He will do it; His ability to uphold you, keep you from falling; everything, all the beauty of Christ’s suitability. Nothing in the sinner but sin; everything in Christ. Now “thine eyes shall see the king in His beauty,” the beauty of His suitability to meet your need, to do for you all that you require. “His beauty.” The beauty of His suitability to do exceeding far abundantly than all that you can ask or think.

“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” The beauty of His fulness, that wonderful fulness of grace, so fitted for sinners who have nothing, sinners who feel their emptiness. O what an attraction there is in

Christ in all His fulness, in all His sufficiency to hear and answer prayer, to comfort!

“Thine eyes shall see the King” in the beauty of His love. Now there is a beauty, isn’t there, in the love of Christ? “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” There is a beauty, there is an attraction in His love. “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” And your eyes shall read your interest in Him. You will see your name engraven upon His breast. You will see that sweet assurance of your acceptance in Him, the Beloved.

“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” We read of a priest. “He shall be a Priest upon His throne” – a royal Priest, a priestly King. In the Old Testament the two offices were never to be united, but in Christ “He shall be a Priest upon His throne.” “Thine eyes shall see the King,” a Priest upon His throne, “made a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec,” ever interceding, presenting the merit of His blood, the way in which a guilty sinner can approach a holy God, the way by which your poor prayers can be acceptable. “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.”

But if He is a Priest, He is a King, King of kings and Lord of lords. You see the beauty of His Kingship , first of all to overthrow all your enemies and then to reign over His people lovingly, wisely and well. Now every enemy of your soul will one day be subdued before your King, even death itself, that last enemy, even those awful sins that plague you. “For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” O but then how graciously does He display the sceptre of His mercy in Zion as He reigns over all His people in love.

“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” Now this was David’s desire. He was a King. But his chief desire was to see the King in His beauty. And I wonder if in the twenty-seventh Psalm he felt the darkness and bondage of that shadowy dispensation. How he longed to have clear, believing views of His God and King in His beauty! “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord.” Now David says, “One thing.” He was an eminent man, an outstanding man; but he said, “There is one thing that I desire.” In



religion he was an eminent man, a godly man. But he said, “There is one thing that I desire.” What is it, David? “That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” You see, David had known what it was to be separated from the house of God, and the Lord so sanctified it to him, that he had such a burning love to the Lord’s earthly courts. Now some of us have known a period in our lives when for a time were separated from hearing the truth. O didn’t we go through the eighty-fourth Psalm! “How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.” O can you really say it, “Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house and the place where Thine honour dwelleth”? In our beginnings, how our ears were bored to the doorposts of the Lord’s house. We could hardly wait for the day to come.

“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord.” Now is that why you love the house of God? And is that why you look forward to the Sabbath? And is that why you love to come? It is that desire just to have a little glimpse of the Lord Jesus in His beauty, so that you come with that prayer, “We would see Jesus.” And your desire is that that wonderful Scripture might be fulfilled: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.” “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord . . . to behold the beauty of the Lord.” “To see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary.”

“Not the fair palaces  
To which the great resort,  
Are once to be compared to this,  
Where Jesus holds His court.”

“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” “That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord.” You see, that prayer was answered for David, wasn’t it? In the twenty-second Psalm, didn’t he view the beauty of the Lord in His sin-atonement sufferings? In the twenty-third Psalm, didn’t he see the beauty of the Lord as the dear Shepherd of His people? In the twenty-fourth Psalm, didn’t He see the beauty of the Lord in His exaltation in heaven? And what did he say? “The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your

heart shall live that seek God.” You see this promise here is the answer to those who pray that prayer. “One thing have I desired of the Lord . . . to behold the beauty of the Lord.” Well, this is the Lord’s kind answer: “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” They shall behold the Lord. We think of Pilate bringing the Lord Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and Pilate said to them, “Behold the Man!” And that is just what faith does. It beholds that dear Man in His sufferings and death, in His exaltation and glory. That will endear Him to you. That will make Him attractive. That will make Him precious. That will make you love Him. The King in all His beauty. King Jesus. You will not want any other. Your idols will go. The world will go. It will be “Jesus only.”

“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.” You say, “That is heaven.” Well, it is. But just permit me two or three minutes on the context here. There is no doubt you all realise the prophecies of Isaiah invariably have a two-fold fulfilment – one literal, one spiritual; one soon to take place and the other one in gospel days. Now what is the literal fulfilment of this? It refers to the time when Sennacherib and the Syrian army completely surrounded Jerusalem – no way of escape, no way of deliverance, certain death, certain destruction. Their king Hezekiah was there in sackcloth and ashes. Really, they were held captives within that city. This is it literally: “Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty.” It will not be long before there is victory, Sennacherib slain, the Syrians defeated, Hezekiah wearing his royal robes again, that privilege that has long been denied. The people will be able to leave their city, travel afar if they wish, go forth to other places. That is the literal fulfilment. “Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.” So the first spiritual meaning of the latter part of the verse is *liberty*. They were not shut up. They could come forth. They were not held fast. They were not prisoners in the city. They were free. They could journey, they could travel where they wished, even to the land that was very far off. O that wonderful promise of gospel liberty to those of you who have been given seeing eyes, yet you mourn over your darkness and your bondage and those things that tie you and bind you fast!

“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off.” Then, of course, this is heaven, and first of all

God's people shall see it by faith, as they have a glimpse of their exalted God and King there and as they are blessed with believing views of the blessedness of the inhabitants. We have it in the last verse: "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." You will have a glimpse of that by faith, sometimes when a loved one is taken from you. "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." That is "the land that is very far off." That is "the land of pure delight." That is the land where there is everlasting spring and never-withering flowers. That is the land where there is no more sin or sorrow or suffering. That is the land where the Lamb is all the glory of the place. For "the city had no need of the sun." Now this is the promise to those who have been awakened, whose eyes have been opened. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." And there will be those believing views of it by faith here, and there will be a little foretaste of it.

O but the promise here is of the certainty of all God's people being brought safely to that land.

"There shall your eyes with wonder view  
The glorious Friend that died for you."

This is the prospect. This is the end of it all. The Lord Jesus shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. This is the joy that was set before Him, for which He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God. This is the prospect, to come even where Jesus is. It is that which makes heaven to be heaven to the people of God – not the pearly gates, the golden streets, but Zion's God and King. It is to see Him, not by faith alone, but by sight, without a veil between. This is the end of it all, God's people brought safely through, God's people eternally landed. And this is the promise. There will not be one left out. There will not be one who miscarries. There will not be the feeblest one snatched away by Satan.

"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." In a word it is this:

“The King there, in His beauty,  
Without a veil is seen;  
It were a well-spent journey,  
Though seven deaths lay between;  
The Lamb with His fair army  
Doth on Mount Zion stand,  
And glory, glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel’s land.”

“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the  
land that is very far off.”