



[Pastor Steven Billings](#)

**Sermon for Advent 1**  
November 27, 2022

## Behold, Our Salvation Is Here!

### Romans 13:8–14

<sup>8</sup> Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup> For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>10</sup> Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

<sup>11</sup> Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Behold, He comes. Our Savior comes to take away the sin of the world. He comes to bring salvation. Therefore, “the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed” (v. 11). In the liturgical year just begun, we set our faces toward Bethlehem, where our Lord first came so that those walking in darkness would bask in His marvelous light. The time has come for us to leave the dark night of our sins and to put on the armor of light.

Behold, He comes! He comes to call you from the midnight of your soul to the Star of Bethlehem. He bids each of us “go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways, and that we may walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem,”<sup>1</sup> as we heard today from the prophet Isaiah.

What are the ways God teaches us? What are the paths in which we are encouraged to walk? St. Paul says in today’s epistle: “Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law . . . Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (v. 8, 10). Just as we are to have a proper relationship with our God, we are to have a proper relationship with our neighbor. “Love your neighbor as yourself,” Paul says (v. 9). And he exhorts us to do this, knowing the time, for salvation *is* nearer to us now than when we first believed” (v. 11).

Our salvation is near, for our Savior is near. Behold, He is our Immanuel – God with us. The light of Christ is with us; yet we walk in darkness. Our sin casts a pall over us so that the Star of Bethlehem and the Sun of Righteousness may not shine on us, though we call on Him to do so. We are not glad when they say to us, “Let us go into the house of the



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LORD.”<sup>2</sup> Consumed with our plans for what we think we need to do to prepare for Christmas, we neglect the more important work of preparing our hearts to receive the King of glory, who entered Bethlehem as an infant, who rode through the gates of Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, and who will come again on a cloud in power and great glory. Beloved, He comes, He will come, He has come. He is here, standing among us in His Holy Word, present before us in His Holy Sacrament. Does this excite us? Does it stir us to receive Him eagerly in His Means of Grace? My friends, if we can’t welcome our Lord appropriately when He comes to us now in the Gifts He has given, how will our hearts ever be ready to welcome Him when He comes at the end of all time – an end much nearer to us now than when we first believed? The Day is at hand, brothers and sisters. Repent! Let us not treat Christmas as a “holiday,” but as the *holy* day it is, for the fulfillment of the end was begun in the incarnation of the Son of God.

The fulfillment of the end is, in truth, now, but not yet. Oh, it *has* come in the Babe of Bethlehem. It has come in the Garden of Gethsemane. It has come at the cross of Calvary. It came on the Eve of Easter and in the resurrection of Christ. Christ has ushered in our new end-time reality and will bring it to its fullness on the Last Day.

The new era of salvation has come. It comes each time we gather here, for our Lord brings us His salvation in His Word. With His life-saving Word He gives His life-giving Spirit, so that the Spirit would enable us to put on Christ, just as Christ was put on us in our Baptism. As Paul writes to the Galatians: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”<sup>3</sup> At the font He clothed us with Himself. The prophet Isaiah says, “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness.”<sup>4</sup>

This robe is ours through faith in Christ. Through Baptism into Christ we are robed in the righteousness of Christ, for He *is* our Righteousness; His blood cleanses us from all sin. We, by faith in Jesus, are “the ones coming out of the great tribulation. [We] have washed [our] robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”<sup>5</sup>

Beloved, the same blood that washes your robe clean makes *you* clean as He gives His blood to you in His Supper – His very body given and His very blood shed for the forgiveness of sins, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. In this holy meal you are sharing in the end-time reality that is yours now, but not yet – now, because He gives you now a foretaste, a glimpse, a preview of His promise in His Holy Supper. Forgiveness is already yours, salvation is yours, heaven itself is yours, because Christ is yours. But the fullness of His promise you will receive later – at the end of time – and you will live in that fullness for all eternity. We look forward to this just as God’s people of old looked forward to our Savior’s first coming. There is a longing in our hearts, as there was in theirs. There is almost a desperation to see Him, to be with Him, to be free of the shackles of this world, the spiritual struggles we endure every day of our lives. Soon, we will be free, beloved. Hallelujah!

Behold, He comes. Our Savior has come to us in the midst of our sin-generated



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chaos, our sin-filled darkness, and has beamed His marvelous, life-creating light. The new day is dawning, beloved. “Hark, a thrilling voice is sounding! ‘Christ is near!’ we hear it say; ‘Cast away the works of darkness, All you children of the day!’”<sup>6</sup> Behold, He comes. Behold, He is here. “Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!”<sup>7</sup> In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

1. Isaiah 2:3
2. Psalm 122:1
3. Galatians 3:27
4. Isaiah 61:10a
5. Revelation 7:14
6. LSB 345:1
7. Matthew 21:9