

**SCRIPTURE READINGS:** Malachi 1:1-8; 2:1-10, 17; 3:1-6; 4:1-6

**EXTRA READINGS:** Apostles' Creed – Canons III/IV, art 3 & rej. 2

**SINGING:** 351:1-2 – 263:1-3 – 362:1-3 – 293:1-3

#### THE VOICE OF GOD IN THE PROPHETS

- Through the prophets God shares His inner thoughts and feelings
- Malachi calls to repentance a decayed church
- His message then is God's message today

### **THE COMING OF THE LORD**

#### I. FEARFUL FOR THE WICKED II. JOYFUL FOR THE GOD-FEARING

##### I. THE COMING OF THE LORD IS *FEARFUL FOR THE WICKED*

###### A. The 'wicked' defined (Ps. 50)

1. Malachi's preaching is directed to *church attenders* (1:6-8)
2. Malachi's preaching was received with unbelief (1:7; 2:14; 2:17; 3:7, 8)
3. Malachi's prophecy is very relevant to us church-going people
  - a. true godliness is miles away from being religious
  - b. true godliness is tender holiness
    - holiness is to live like Christ-like
    - holiness is pure love and living above the world while in it
4. Malachi's wicked are unrepentant and unbelieving church goers

###### B. The message: *Jesus is coming!* (3:1-2; 4:1)

1. Malachi's audience was *eagerly anticipating* Him (3:1)
2. Yet God warns that His coming is a solemn reality
  - a. for God hasn't changed His character of holiness (4:4-6)
  - b. for Jesus' coming will be refining judgment (3:2-3) and a consuming fire (4:1)
    - this is 'bad news' for *wicked – proud – self-centered – unholy*
    - examine yourself today!
3. Don't sleep on foolishly if you falsely at *ease in Zion!*

## II. THE COMING OF THE DAY OF THE LORD IS JOYFUL FOR THE GOD-FEARERS

A. Why did Malachi prophesy this part of Jesus' coming?

B. True God-fearers do not need to fear His coming

1. Who are the true God-fearers?

a. the fear of God defined

- it is the fruit of being known of God and knowing Him
- it has a clear character of love and esteem for God
- it is an experiential or emotional reality of one's life

b. the God-fearers are *hungering and thirsting for righteousness*

- find a pleasure in God's holiness
- battle with inability or powerlessness to be and do right
- they are learning to look to Christ as their Savior (Luke 2:25, 38)

2. God-fearers need not fear Jesus' coming!

a. lift up your weary hearts: *He is coming to heal you with His salvation*

- Sun of Righteousness is *source – power – content of salvation*

b. for He comes as a *Sun to finalize the healing process He began!*

- God's initial coming is to *wound – humble – convict*
- Jesus' presence and future appearance is complete His work

c. all His healing is summed up in vs. 2b – 3

REFLECTION QUESTION: *How do you think about Christ's second coming?*

A. "I rather don't think about it because it scares me."

B. "In some ways I fear it still though I also long for it."