

**Introduction:** We need to always remember that God has moved in all He created so that His final and very good creation, human beings, may be purified to reverently worship Him, healed and filled with joy. The result of His salvation and deliverance is to have peace from enemies and peace with God to serve Him. \*\*\* What is amazing about God is that He is justice and mercy, Judge and Savior; and, that He is always communicating about Himself and His Ways to those with ears to hear Him. \*\*\* As we shall hear this morning, He has spoken through His prophets starting with Moses. Some of the key prophets have been Nathan (David's prophet), Isaiah, Ezekiel, and especially His Son: The Savior King (*Hebrews 1:1-4; 3:1-6*). \*\*\* We begin with what one of the last prophets said before Jesus was born of Mary. Then we will hear the amazing prophecy a priest proclaimed about his newborn son while Jesus was still in Mary's womb. \*\*\* We will also hear that one of God's gracious gifts to those who fear Him is Peace; and, that He desires His people should work for peace now while also eagerly seeking His return to bring His Peace (*Isaiah 9:6*).

**I. The Lord will come suddenly to purify and judge; and, for those who fear His Name there will be healing, but the wicked will be trodden.** (*Malachi 3:1-6; 4:1-3, 5*)

A. The Lord will suddenly come to His Temple and purify the priests, but will judge oppressors who do not fear Him. (*Malachi 3:1-6*)

1. Behold! I am sending My messenger to clear out the way, and The Lord you are seeking will come suddenly. (*Verses 3a-b*)

**Wake up:** Behold is always a wakeup call for those to whom God is speaking!

**Malachi:** The prophet's name means 'my messenger'. He is speaking of John the Baptist.

**Clear out:** Jesus' parable of the seeds and soils speaks to this. The third soil had weeds that choked the fruitfulness of the plant. Jesus wants His disciples to bear much lasting fruit. (*Luke 8:14; John 15:16*) So, let us allow Him to 'weed' us!

**Seek:** To seek The Lord means to search for Him diligently to find Him and be with Him. His people beg Him to come down as we heard from Isaiah last week. (*Isaiah 64:1*) Jesus commanded people to seek Him and His Kingdom. (*Matthew 6:33*)

**Sudden:** The Lord Jesus could return at any time and it will be as sudden as lightning! (*Luke 17:24*)

2. He will bring The Covenant to them and be their delight: Behold! He has come. (*Verse 1c*)

**Covenant:** His New Covenant is: God with us and us with God – a mutually present relationship!

**Delight:** The word means to have great, gracious pleasure! Yahweh told His people that He would restore them from their discipline and desolation to call them 'married' (Beulah) and 'My delight is in her' (Hephzibah, *Isaiah 62:1-5*).

**Wake up:** This is another command to wake up to His voice.

3. Who can endure the day of His coming? Who can stand when He appears? (*Verses 2a-b*)

**Rhetorical questions:** Because we are all sinners, the answer is no one!

4. Because He is like a refiner's fire and a launderer's soap. (*Verse 2c*)

**Fire:** Fire is often used as an image of purification. Sinners need to be purified to have covenant communion with God. Jesus did this in His first coming and will complete it with His second coming.

5. He has sat as a refiner and purifier of silver for the Levites so they may offer sacrifices to Yahweh in righteousness, and the offering will be pleasant to Yahweh as in the days of Moses. (*Verses 3-4*)

**Holy priesthood:** The Lord will make the Levites to be the holy priesthood they were called to be.

**Pleasant:** A pleasant offering is acceptable, appeasing and satisfying to the one to whom it is given. This ultimately speaks of the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf.

6. Then I will come near to you to swiftly judge five groups of people. (*Verse 5*)

**Judgment of wicked:** In addition to sorcerers, adulterers and liars, there are those who oppress and turn aside God's favored people (manual laborer, widow, orphan and foreign sojourner) as well as the proud and arrogant who consider themselves 'gods'.

7. Because I (am) Yahweh, I have not changed, and you, sons of Jacob, have not ceased to be. (*Verse 6*)

**Faithful to Himself:** He is the perfect Father who cares for and protects His children. So they can expect His sudden return to purify them for salvation and judge their wicked enemies.

B. The day is coming that will burn up the arrogant, but will be healing and joy for those who fear Yahweh, Who will send Elijah. (*Malachi 4:1-3, 5*)

1. For, Behold! The Day is coming, burning as a furnace, and all the proud and all doing wickedly have been as chaff – they have been burned in the coming Day says Yahweh Sabaoth. (*Verses 1a-c*)

**Wake up:** This third command to wake up is addressed to wicked and proud people.

**Judgment by fire:** The Day of The Lord's sudden second coming will result in the dreadful judgment of fire of those who persist in sin. (*Hebrews 9:26-31*)

2. It (The Day) will not leave to them root or branch. (*Verse 1d*)

**Wicked consumed:** The wicked will be totally consumed below and above by The One who is the Branch and Root of Jesse (David's father, *Isaiah 11:1-10*). This is an ironic 'word play' concerning the judgment of those who reject The Savior.

3. Has arisen to those fearing of My Name, sun (of) righteousness and healing in its wings; and you all have gone out and skipped about as calves from the stall. (*Verse 2*)

**Contrast:** The consuming burning of the wicked is contrasted with poetic images of great joy for God's faithful covenant people!

**Reverence of faith:** The fear of Yahweh is faith in The Awesome, Fearsome and Powerful God.

**Light:** The Sun of Righteousness speaks of The Light in which God is dwelling in which no one may approach. (*1 Timothy 6:16*)

**Healing:** The Light gives both righteousness and health to those fearing and delighting in Yahweh.

*The Lord gives light to those who delight in Him*

4. And Yahweh Sabaoth says they have trodden the wicked (as grapes) under their feet in The Day He has done (it). (*Verse 3*)

**Saints come with Him:** The New Testament says Jesus will come again to judge with His saints (those made holy and righteous IN Him) with Him. (*1 Thessalonians 3:13; Jude, verses 14-16*)

5. Behold! (I am) sending to you all Elijah the prophet before it comes: The Great and Fearful Day of Yahweh. (*Verse 5*)

**John the Baptist:** This is a future wake up warning. When the Jews asked John if he was the prophet, they were expecting Him to announce the fiery judgment of the wicked by Yahweh. Instead, he was announcing The One who would bring redemption and forgiveness in grace and mercy. ... We now turn to a prophecy from John's father about him ...

## II. The Lord God has raised up salvation in David's line to give His people to serve Him; and, John will give knowledge of salvation because of God's 'tender mercy' to guide to peace. (Luke 1:68-79)

A. The Lord God has come and done redemption to show mercy, and to remember His covenant so His people serve Him in holiness and righteousness. (Verses 68-75)

1. Praise (be) The Lord God of Israel that He has come and worked redemption to His people. (Verse 68)

**Praise:** Literally, Zechariah is saying 'good word' to The Lord.

**Redemption:** Redemption is one person purchasing another out of slavery. Here it is God in human flesh purchasing His people from slavery to sin. Notice it is in the past tense since all who looked forward to The Redeemer by faith in Messianic prophecy had already been redeemed!

2. He has raised up a horn of salvation in the house (family) of His servant David as He said from eternity through the holy mouth of His prophets. (Verses 69-70)

**Raised up horn:** In Scripture horn symbolizes strength. Think of a ram! As God is eternal, He always speaks from eternity.

**Son of David:** The prophet Nathan told David a descendant of his would be the eternal King of God's Kingdom.

(2 Samuel 7:8-13 || 1 Chronicles 17:7-14; Matthew 9:27-31; 15:22-28; 22:41-46)

3. Salvation from our enemies who hate us, to show mercy with our fathers. (Verses 71-72a)

**Present salvation:** Zechariah is inspired to say that salvation is now a present reality in this horn from David's family.

**Mercy:** Mercy is people not getting the punishment they deserve for their deeds. (Exodus 34:1-10)

4. To remember His holy covenant, the oath He swore to our father Abraham. (Verses 72b-73a)

**Covenant:** The covenant with Israel was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai: 'I will take you for my people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God'. (Exodus 6:1-7, RSV)

**Abrahamic promise:** The writer of Hebrews says God's promise of blessing and multiplication to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) was confirmed by a sworn oath, and it is hope for those who have fled for refuge in Jesus (Hebrews 6:13-20, KJV).

5. In order to give to us, fearless having been delivered from our enemies, to serve Him in holiness and righteousness all our days. (Verses 73b-75)

**Gift of grace:** Since the rescue and service to God are a gift, they are of grace.

**Fear:** We heard from Malachi that fear of Yahweh gives holiness and righteousness. This is good. However, fear of man is not pleasing to God. Here God has delivered His people from human (and spiritual) enemies so they have no fear of man.

**Serve:** Through Jesus, all God's people are now able to serve Him as David did. (Acts 13:36)

**Summary:** All who fear The Lord have been delivered to serve Him in holiness and righteousness – Amazing Grace!

B. John will be a prophet of The Most High to prepare the way and to give knowledge of salvation, forgiveness and God's mercy to walk in peace. (Verses 76-79)

1. But you also, my child, will be called prophet of The Most High because you will go on before Lord to make ready His way. (Verse 76)

**Purpose:** John will be the messenger spoken of through Malachi.

2. In order to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins because of the affections of mercy of our God. (Verses 77-78a)

**Gift of knowledge and forgiveness:** Once again, it is by God's gracious gift that we can know of salvation and the forgiveness of sins IN Jesus by the death He would endure for our sakes on The Cross so our sins may be forgiven. Jesus demonstrated by His actions the affections of God's Mercy!

3. In which affections, the rising dawn will visit us with help from on high to shine to those in darkness and sitting in shadow of death. (Verses 78b-79a)

**Future coming:** Here Zechariah is giving a short term prophecy about the soon to come birth of Jesus The Messiah; and, what He would accomplish in His life, death, resurrection, ascension and giving of The Holy Spirit.

**Shine in darkness:** He will be Light in the shadow of death – echoing David's well-known Psalm. (Psalm 23)

Two thousand years later, may we all live in The Light while working to speed His return.

4. In order to direct our feet into way of peace. (Verse 79b)

**Directed walk:** The Holy Spirit directs us to follow Jesus, The Way.

**Way of PEACE:** This alludes to a Psalm saying there is no one righteous who seeks God and knows the way of peace.

(Psalm 14 (LXX); Isaiah 59:1-8) Paul wrote Jesus overcame this word so we can be righteous by faith in Him and

have peace with God. (Romans 3:9-26; 5:1-5) IF we have His peace, we will be blessed to be peacemakers. (Matthew 5:9)

### **The Lord will suddenly come again to deliver peace fulfilled**

C. The prophets. (Various)

1. Isaiah: Yahweh keeps in perfect peace those who trust Him with steadfast hearts; and all children taught by Him have great peace. (Isaiah 26:3; 54:13)

### **The Lord will suddenly come again to deliver peace fulfilled**

2. Ezekiel: In a prophetic parable Yahweh is The Shepherd, His people are His sheep. He says He will make His servant David to be their One Shepherd, making a covenant of peace with them. (Ezekiel 34)

### **The Lord will suddenly come again to deliver peace fulfilled**

3. IN Jesus: Jesus, the supreme prophet, said He would leave His peace for His disciples; and, they could have courage in a world of tribulation because they have peace IN Him! (John 14:27; 16:33) The hope we are now living by is:

### **The Lord will suddenly come again to deliver peace fulfilled**

**Conclusion:** The Lord will suddenly come to those who delight in Him and bring to those fearing Him light and joy. He has already come to redeem sinners in His mercy for them to serve Him before their enemies and to know Him and His salvation to direct them to His Peace.

### **The Lord will suddenly come again to deliver peace fulfilled**