

Second Sunday in Advent – 2024

Saturday, 12/7 at 4:00 & Sunday, 12/8 at 9:00

# Are You Ready to Meet Jesus?

Text: Malachi 3:1-7b NAS 1995

Advent Wednesdays: Service 11, Meal 12 | Meal 6, Service 7

**Introduction:** Dear friends: Jesus came to take away sins, and He will come again! **ARE YOU READY TO MEET JESUS?**

In the OT, God ✦chose Abram, ✦promised to bless him, and ✦promised to bring the Messiah into the world through his descendants:

- Over the centuries, God ✦grew them into millions of people, ✦gave them the Promised Land, and ✦established them as a great nation.
- However, *because of their persistent disobedience*, God ✦divided the nation, ✦caused Israel to be conquered, and ✦caused Judah to be conquered.
- But then, *after 70 years*, God restored Judah. The people were undeserving, *nevertheless*, God did it! However, ✦the troubles experienced, and ✦the mercies received did NOT change the hearts of the people 😞.

Now, *in Malachi*, God warns the people that He will send His messenger to prepare the way for the Messiah, who will come ➡like a fire to purify the repentant ones and ➡as the final judge to eternally condemn the unrepentant ones.

1. **A Prophecy of the Coming of John and Jesus:** <sup>1</sup> **“Behold, I [God the Father] am going to send My messenger [John the Baptizer], and he will clear the way before Me [by calling everyone to repent]. And the Lord [My Son, the promised Messiah], whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts.** // Like the people at the time of Malachi, ▶ many look good on the outside, ▶ but have **unrepentant** hearts on the inside. The LORD is not happy, but, still, He ☞ loves us and ☞ is calling for radical change in our hearts!
- The Timing: Malachi was written about 425 years before the birthdays of John the Baptizer and Jesus.
  - John the Baptizer: He was sent by God to call people to repent *for the forgiveness of their sins*.
  - What Is Repentance? Let’s understand it in these **two critical ways** – and may BOTH be true in our lives:
    - Ultimate: The work of the Holy Spirit to ▶ show us our helplessness to save ourselves and ▶ gift us with saving faith in Jesus.
    - Ongoing: To grow us in living as God’s holy children by ▶ fleeing from sin and ▶ following God’s will for our lives.
2. **Jesus’ First Coming to Purify:** <sup>2</sup> **“But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. <sup>3</sup> He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness. <sup>4</sup> Then the offering of Judah and**

**Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.”**

- a. Who Can Stand? **No one!** “None is righteous” (Rm. 3:10).
  - b. How Thorough Is Jesus’ Purifying? Even MORE than ☞*fire to gold* and ☞*a fuller’s soap to wool*, **Jesus’ blood** makes the most vial sinner **HOLY IN GOD’S SIGHT!**
  - c. What are the Fruits of being Purified?
    - i. **Psalm 51:17** “The sacrifices of God are a **broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart**, O God, You will not despise.”
    - ii. **Romans 12:1** “...I urge you... to **present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice**, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”
3. **Jesus’ Second Coming to Judge:**<sup>5</sup> “**Then I** [*through My Son*] **will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me,” says the LORD of hosts.**
- a. God’s Judgment Is Coming: So, *let us be **serious** and **quick about repenting!*** Malachi mentioned those who ✦*practice magic by the power of evil spirits*, ✦*commit adultery*, ✦*make false promises*, ✦*take wrongful advantage of workers, widows, and orphans*, ✦*reject needy foreigners*, and ✦*do not rightly respect the LORD God Almighty* (*see the footnote for many other sins*<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Some other lists of sins: Mark 7:21–22; 1 Co. 6:9–10; Gal. 5:19–21; Rev. 21:8.

b. Do You Love God's Truth? <sup>NIV</sup> **2 Thessalonians 2:10b-12**  
“They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason, God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.”

4. **A Plea to Repent:** <sup>6</sup> “For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. <sup>7</sup> From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept *them*. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts. // *Good news!*

a. The LORD Does Not Change: “He continues to condemn sin, but His mercy also endures forever” (TLSB).

b. Return to the LORD: How? Repent!

- i. **Stop** believing what opposes God's word!
- ii. **Stop** trusting in yourself for heaven!
- iii. **Stop** speaking and living like the devil!
- iv. **Start** trusting in Jesus for eternal life!
- v. **Start** being right from the inside out!
- vi. **Start** honoring the LORD in word and deed!

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Jesus, knowing that You are coming, *we are uneasy*; however, knowing who You are, what You have done, and the fact that all repentant ones are purified by Your precious blood, *we are at peace!* **TYSVM!**

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