

Living Responsibly in the Community of Faith

Key Verse: *“I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in. . . . But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.”*
—Malachi 3:1,2

Selected Scripture:
*Malachi 2:17-3:5;
4:1-3*

AS THE LAST MESSENGER

to Israel prior to the time of John the Baptist, the Prophet Malachi issued a stern rebuke to that nation for their faithlessness and hypocrisy. “Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?”—Mal. 2:17

Our Key Verse indicates the Heavenly Father would use some agency to prepare Israel for their Messiah during his First Advent even though, as a nation, they failed to receive him. By his ministry of repentance to the Jewish people, John the Baptist served in that capacity by pointing to Jesus as

the ‘messenger of the covenant’ described by Malachi.
—John 1:19-28

True Christians also have been proclaiming that Jesus Christ, at his Second Advent, does a judgment work to separate his faithful followers from others who profess to be believers but, in fact, teach false doctrines or have lifestyles that do not reflect devotion to godly principles.

The ultimate result of Christ’s Second Advent will be to eradicate all unrighteousness and bring blessings to members of the human family who respond positively to the regulations of God’s kingdom, when Satan is bound for one thousand years and no longer will be able to deceive mankind.—Mal. 3:3-5; Rev. 20:1-3

“Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.”—Mal. 4:1-4

The foregoing passage indicates the ‘Sun of righteousness,’ the leadership of Christ and his elect church, will end earth’s weary night of sin. Man will have his heart healed from the effects of sin, and will desire to ‘grow up’ as truly righteous beings. All who desire to come into harmony with righteousness from both present and past ages will benefit from the great atonement sacrifice by the Master. How comforting it is to appreciate the precious promises recorded in the Bible. “All flesh shall see the salvation of God.”—Luke 3:6 ■