

Malachi 4 (New International Version)

1 "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. 2 But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. 3 Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the LORD Almighty.

4 "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

Luke 1: 13-17, as the angel, Gabriel, appeared to Zechariah, a priest and the husband of Elizabeth, and said: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come, off-spring of the favored one.
Veiled in flesh, the God-head see; hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased, as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Hark!...*

Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth. *Hark!...*

**OASIS: Hope for our Relationships (Malachi 4: 1-6):
Christmas “mini-study” or devotional**

Introduction: Today we are going to do something different. We are going to think about 3 texts--one from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament and then one from a Christmas carol, written by Charles Wesley in 1739.

- Pray for the Holy Spirit’s to prepare our hearts (if you haven’t already prayed)
- Read each passage after giving a 60 second explanation of the context.

The Malachi passage:

- Context: Malachi is really the last of the canonical OT prophets, separated by over 400 years until the arrival of John the Baptist, who fulfills Mal’s prediction. Even though he writes nearly 100 years after the end of the Babylonian captivity, and the Jews have returned to their homeland and have rebuilt the temple, they are at a low point spiritually. Malachi’s message serves as a “wake-up call.”
- What hope might the Israelites have drawn from the prophecy?
- What hope and help might they have derived for their relationships (their one anothering)?

The Luke passage:

- Context: Zechariah is a priest in the temple, and husband of Elizabeth, relative to Mary. Elizabeth had been unable to conceive, and now both she and her husband were well advanced in years. The angel of the Lord, Gabriel, appears to Zechariah with this message.
- What hope might Zechariah have drawn from the angel’s message?
- What hope and help might he and the Jewish people derived for their relationships (their one anothering)?

The Christmas carol:

- Context: This carol was written by Charles Wesley in 1739 (and modified by George Whitefield and others in the 1750s).
- As we read or sing this carol, what help has God already provided?
- What promises or hopes do we keep looking forward to come?

Summary: God has spoken, promised and prophesied—down through the ages

God has acted, answering the cries and needs of the hearts of his people.

While we have much to hope and wait for,
there is also a lot for which to **rejoice** and
a lot for of “**one anothering**” to do!